

# THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

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# THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

*by*

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## INTRODUCTION

THE title *Thrice Against England* will primarily be understood by the reader as a sober statement of the historical fact that during the period with which this book deals — between the great French revolution and the present day — three attempts have been made by continental powers to overthrow British sea power.

History is ever on the move and epochs are never systematically repeated. This implies that each period has its unique character. How far and in what sense the author recognizes the resemblances between the three separate attacks upon England as a means for helping us to understand the present will be disclosed in the course of exposition.

There is particular point in the title *Thrice Against England*, for the complicated problem of European continental power as against British sea power is here regarded not mainly from the outlook of the British Isles but from that of the European continent.

It is necessary to keep constantly in mind the importance of sea power in general, for in no other way can the economic, strategical, and political problems of Napoleonic France, Imperial Germany, and finally of National Socialist Germany be grasped and understood.

The author has endeavoured to depict matters in their vital interdependence and to present them as concretely as possible. The more important references to leading authorities are given throughout the text.

KURT STECHERT

Stockholm  
March 1942

## NAPOLEON

FOR the third time since the days of Napoleon a titanic struggle rages between a great European continental power and British sea power, and for a second time this continental power happens to be Germany.

As long ago as the first World War there existed in Germany an influential trend to make war mean but one thing: to kill at home and abroad the spirit of the Rights of Man, liberalism, and democracy. To-day this movement reigns supreme in the German state. Having established the principle within its own frontiers, Germany in accordance with her programme aims at setting up the same principles on an international scale. 'The true plague of Europe, mainly focused in Germany, was the idea of equality,' said Herr von Papen, Hitler's pathfinder and ally, in February 1933. At the same date, Edgar Jung, the most notable ideologist of aristocratic conservatism, rejoiced in declaring: 'Sham democracy has collapsed and the storming of the Bastille of liberalism has succeeded.'

In many respects these aristocratic conservatives held different views from the National Socialists. But common to the two factions was their irreconcilable enmity to the Europe of the epoch which arose out of the French revolution of 1789.

Yet out of this revolution there emerged not only our modern society but, inseparably connected therewith, the mass-armies recruited from the peoples and likewise the modern art of war. In latter-day Germany, Clausewitz's theories of warfare are looked upon as authoritative though they represent a direct continuation of Napoleon's technique — which was not by any means created by himself. Napoleon merely developed and applied such theories in social conditions arising out of the new structure born of the French revolution. We shall see in due course how all this has developed, and we shall see, too, how Prussia (apart altogether from the uprising of other peoples and the dominating role played by British maritime power) was only able to free herself from the Napoleonic yoke by taking what was best in the French revolution and modelling herself upon these trends. And we shall further see that

for Prussia and Germany's victories of 1866 and 1870-71, which led to unification and the establishment of the German Empire, as well as her preponderance in the campaigns and in the last and the present wars, are incomprehensible unless we take into consideration the ideas and achievements of the great epoch which followed the French revolution.

No matter how trifling National Socialists may deem these achievements, it remains an historical fact that they constitute the bulk of the capital upon which the present regime exists. It was the hacking away of feudal chains — the liberation of the peasant and the citizen, the freeing of the mind and of research, the replacement of the police-governing factor by a legal constitution, the liquidation of medieval autocracy by establishing world trade, the introduction of free labour in place of compulsory labour, the democratization of the schools and of the whole educational system, the rights granted to the middle classes and the workers to set up unions and to join their fellow citizens — which enabled Germany to become a leading economic and military power. Only upon the basis of these material and ideal acquisitions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was Germany able to create the training, the equipment, the maintenance, the command, and the striking power of her vast armies. And ever since the French revolution such armies have faced one another in mounting numbers and with steadily improved armament. No mystical interpretation can do away with the fact that the mother of the modern mass-army is the French revolution. Not only is the birth of the mass-army inseparably linked with the birth of the Rights of Man, but likewise the birth of the idea that the people constitutes one identical nation combining in defence of the homeland.

When the third estate, the lower classes, had been freed from guild coercion, hereditary servitude, the dominance of the nobility, and the tutelage of the priesthood the subject became a human being, and from the mass of freed human beings the nation arose. Henceforward the army was no longer a mercenary one at the beck and call of sovereign rulers, but a people's army with an entirely new spirit, living and fighting in new ways. All this ultimately derives from the French revolution. How preposterous, therefore, to vilify that revolution and at the same time to glorify totalitarian warfare!

Already during the first World War, alike in Germany and in other lands, parallels were being drawn with the Napoleonic campaigns.

Subsequently this became more frequent, while recent events have caused the comparison to become even more frequent. These comparisons are sometimes amazingly apposite. The use of the historical parallel, however, serves its purpose only when the difference between the several contrasted epochs is taken into account. But although history never repeats itself, yet in similar conditions like problems do actually recur. This is especially true as regards the strategic principles of the struggle between a continental European power and British sea power. Of course careful consideration must be given to the changes that have resulted from the use of submarines and aircraft. So far as tanks are concerned, they have not altered the picture at all, for the English Channel stopped the tank divisions just as effectively as it stopped Napoleon's mass-armies which at the time of their creation revolutionized the whole technique of war. This is not to say that the British Isles are as invulnerable to-day as they were. But the fact that war on the shores of the English Channel has been stabilized since the summer of 1940 proves beyond a doubt that the combination of tanks and aircraft upon which all German successes on the continent have so far been based has not been applicable in the war against Great Britain. It is already obvious that where the sea begins, even at the present juncture, there a new law of strategy comes into operation. Rules of strategy have not undergone any change since Napoleon's day. For this reason the struggle of continental power against sea power remains in many respects unaltered. Hans Ritter, an officer on the German General Staff, writing in 1921 about the first World War, remarks: 'In her struggle for existence, Germany manifests characteristics in her war policy which show a marked resemblance to Napoleon's life work.' This, in a way, is equally valid for the current war.

By emphasizing the words 'characteristics in her war policy', we imply that the essence of the comparison does not lie in the fact that the war against England was, in Napoleonic France as well as in Germany to-day, preceded by a revolution, for no such revolution had taken place in imperial Germany before the war of 1914-18. The German Empire of that day had to face a war on two fronts, a defaulting Italy, and a better equipped France; yet she gained mighty successes on the continent and was on the verge of conquering France almost as thoroughly as she did in 1940. This shows that the extant military power of Germany is not mainly anchored in the National Socialist revolution. In some respects,

as we shall see later, the enormous advantage gained by the Third Reich in starting her war production earlier than the Allies is both negatively and positively closely connected with the National Socialist revolution. But the general conditions — personnel, technique, industry, finance — necessary for the achievement of this advantage were handed over ready-made to the National Socialist revolution at the very outset. The military strength of Napoleonic France, however, was rooted in the French revolution. But this is not the sole fundamental difference between the two revolutions.

In our own century, the only event which can stand comparison with the tremendous, dynamic ideological energy of the French revolution is the Russian revolution. The latter, however, affected the peasantry of Asia to a wider extent than the modern industrial states of Europe. But whatever comparisons we may make, it remains obvious that from a sociological point of view the French revolution and the National Socialist revolution are not comparable entities. The former created a new world, whereas the latter is linked in more ways than one with the feudal-conservative trend of Prussia in particular and Germany as a whole. Such an outlook can never be reconciled with the new factors which the French revolution originated. Throughout the whole of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth, Germany has always endeavoured to impose obstacles in the path of historical evolution.

Just as the Old Prussian squirearchy or junkerdom was not fortuitously allied against liberalism and the modern industrial workers' movement, so likewise, though treating the fundamental achievements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with contumely, National Socialism owes its great continental victories to these very achievements. In this respect we find certain points of similarity with Napoleon. The Corsican's activities, in some ways, were characterized by corresponding contradictions of principle because, on the one hand, he vanquished the continent owing to the extant achievements of the French revolution with its completely new organization of the army, while on the other, he distorted and even killed many of the ideas of the revolution. Favoured by strong economic group-interests, he never annulled the fundamental reforms introduced by his predecessors, but utilized them to promote his policy of world conquest. This policy, in more than one respect, linked up with the ancient traditions of France, and its ultimate goal and main

features became from day to day less consistent with the ideas promulgated by the French revolution. What Napoleon carried on the point of his sword across Europe was, despite some reforms, nothing but the shadow of that great upheaval. His mass-armies alone remained the essential being which was born out of the revolution. Because these mass-armies were bound up with the social achievements of the French revolution as closely as a tank army is with industrialism and oil supplies, Napoleon would never have considered, for instance, that the social status of the peasantry harked back to traditions born during the *ancien régime*. Had he grasped this fact, he would have been compelled to smash the foundations of the traditional armies and consequently would never have become master of Europe. The needs arising out of war conditions forced him to retain many reforms and even to introduce new ones. Thus he was able to pose before many Frenchmen as the completer and defender of the revolution against home and foreign enemies. He also played a part as liberator in the face of a Europe martyred by feudalism; and, with the idea of freedom, he was able for a long time to terrorize freedom. The lively hopes of the inhabitants of Europe were thwarted in great measure by the painful experience that Napoleon did not represent the best aspects of the French revolution, and came, not as a liberator, but as a conqueror. Not until they had passed through the tragic school of experience did the peoples of Europe fully realize this. But so long as Great Britain remained undefeated it was never too late for the nations to win their freedom, and this was their consolation amid their direst misfortunes.

On September 3rd, 1791, a new constitution was promulgated and this has served more or less as the prototype of all nineteenth-century constitutions. In this document there is an article which declares that the sovereign French nation renounces all wars of conquest and that its armies will not be used to attack the freedom of other nations. This was the logical outcome of the basic idea of the new constitution that the natural and inalienable rights of mankind are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

What had Napoleon in common with this national idea? He broke with it even before giving utterance to his idea of a universal monarchy and his plans for world conquest.

Is there in this respect any parallel with the present day? No. Despite views widely held in England, the annexation of Czechoslovakia does

not constitute a breach with the nationalist ideas of the National Socialist revolution. Indeed, National Socialism, appealing to the principle of nationality arising out of liberalism, began by demanding a revision of the Treaty of Versailles. But its aims for a greater Germany went far beyond this, and it was by Bismarck in 1866 and not by the Treaty of Versailles that Austria was excluded from Germany. In any case, greater Germany was still an aim thoroughly compatible with the principle of nationality. The principle of nationality has, however, been *a priori* superseded by the idea of 'living space', for living space, as we can read in the literature of National Socialism and its programme, has never been identical with the ethnographical frontiers of Germany. On the contrary, the programme makes it quite clear that Germany must burst her own boundaries at the expense of other people's and conquer new lands in Europe first of all. Further, the programme points out that Germany must not be restricted by political frontiers for the simple reason that the nationalistic movement cannot allow itself to be the advocate of other peoples. As Hitler quite logically and consistently wrote in *Mein Kampf*: 'We are not policemen to watch over the far-famed "poor little nations", but soldiers of our own realm.'

If we compare these words with those of the French constitution of 1791, it becomes obvious that the National Socialists' concept of nationality differs widely from that of the French revolution. Consequently there is no parallel here with Napoleon's breach with the basic national idea of the French revolution. Nevertheless there are important points of contact between Napoleon's idea of universal monarchy and the National Socialist idea of living space, since both these concepts are incompatible with the idea of a nation's right to self-determination, and for this reason they conflict with historical evolution.

A fundamental difference between the French revolution and the National Socialist revolution lies, above all, in the fact that out of the latter, in contrast with the former, there has not arisen any essentially new army system. Warfare based upon tanks is not comparable with the birth of the mass-army during the French revolution. Further, tanks are not a German invention but an English one. Again, it is amply evident that, during the recent African campaign against the Italians, the British (in contrast with the French) had not forgotten which weapon (apart from the blockade) had decided the issue of the war on the continent in

1918. Finally, the British tank divisions in Africa dissipated the Italian fascist legend that a state cannot wage a war of annihilation until it has become fascist. The fascists apparently wished to compare their own revolution with the great French one. From the outset, the fascists claimed to be introducing a new epoch and did so mainly with reference to their own army organization. The first and longer established fascist state has failed to prove that fascism is identical with efficiency in waging war. Though their ideology is similar, not to say identical, this cannot alter the fact that the economic, cultural, and military differences between Italy and Germany are as widely divergent to-day as they were during the previous World War. As a matter of plain fact, neither German efficiency nor Italian mediocrity is the outcome of the recent revolutions in the respective countries. The problem goes much deeper. This will become ever more obvious in the course of this book. All that can be affirmed at this juncture is that the boastful slogans of Italian fascism do not conform with reality for the simple reason that Italy lacks the essential sociological conditions which would have enabled her to revolutionize her military system.

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What a vastly different picture is presented when we turn to consider the French revolution. This new epoch in warfare was never announced. It was created and became an actual fact. The eminent military historian Hans Delbrück, in his pioneer work *The History of Warfare in the Framework of Political History*, declares: 'The French were far from imagining that the military measures taken during their revolution were to influence the whole military organization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.' Even the British, and among them the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, had no inkling that when they first made use of tanks they stood godfather to a pioneer technique in land warfare. The new epoch in warfare, so enthusiastically announced by the fascists, has so far not yet dawned. General Fuller, writer and military expert, states that from what he witnessed of the Italo-Abyssinian campaign in 1935-36, the British have nothing to learn from the Italians so far as tank warfare is concerned. The combination of tank and aircraft is merely a fresh adjustment to modern technical conditions and is in no way a revolution in the art of warfare. In highly industrialized countries this development did not

require a social revolution as was the case in France. All that was needed for its introduction was a total and systematic military utilization of the extant industrial machinery and technique, subject, of course, to human capacity for putting it into execution.

To pose the question in a very simplified form, we may say that in 1806 Prussia was defeated by Napoleon because she had neglected to modernize the state and social conditions. On the other hand, France was defeated by Germany in 1940 because, apart from her numerical inferiority and the role played by Italy, etc., she had failed to create an equally well organized and mechanized army and a sufficient air force. Napoleonic France was triumphant because she had the advantage of a revolutionary epoch behind her. National Socialist Germany was victor in the field because she had the advantage of starting her war preparations well in advance of other nations. Compared with this, all that will be discussed in the sequel is of minor importance, though we have to appreciate certain factors. One of these is the efficiency of the officers of the old Reichswehr who had learned many a lesson from the defeat in 1918 and who, in the Third Reich, though they possessed no political influence, held their own so far as military science was concerned. But this body of officers, trained in the spirit of General von Seeckt, knew only too well that at the stage of development achieved in Napoleon's day it was the human and moral energies that were decisive, whereas in the twentieth century industrial energies play the leading part. All said and done, it is the human element which decides the issue, for man alone can create and master those energies. Yet 'no matter how brave a man may be, he is of no use unless he be adequately armed', says Lieutenant-General Horst von Metsch. Even to-day — and we may as well say at once, especially to-day — in the last resort it is the human factor which will decide the issue in one way or another and that only for a certain length of time. In a war of the industrial epoch, however, this will turn out to be a decisive factor. At the present stage in the development of the technique of war and the powers conferred on the state to control not only things but human beings, it will in certain circumstances be possible to enforce military decisions upon a less prepared country before it has been given an opportunity to catch up with the superiority in armaments achieved by its opponents. In situations such as these, even the best kind of democracy will fail for lack of opportunity in turning the scales by

throwing in the military advantages which remain. But all this was fundamentally different in Napoleonic times. What was important then was: How great a mass of soldiers could be mustered and to what extent they were truly volunteers. To make good any deficiency by means of vastly superior equipment was at that epoch impossible. In addition, that government had not the means at its disposal for keeping a watch on the activities of every citizen and soldier, even for a short period. The stage was not yet set for such supervision, in view of the social and technical development of the day. As regards the forcing of soldiers into modern battles, the German army psychologist Captain Pintschovius who, like Metsch, belongs to the von Seeckt school, writes: 'This may be possible at the outset but not later on.' In the Napoleonic epoch matters were quite otherwise. At that date it would have been impossible to force soldiers into battle even in the beginning of a campaign. Therefore the first and most important asset for waging war successfully was individual initiative and the readiness of the masses to engage in the struggle. For this reason everything depended upon the masses of soldiers that could be mustered and the extent to which they could be made to feel that the war was their own affair. Whichever party had the advantage in this respect was, however ill equipped, able sometimes to resist far better armed forces. In our day such a situation is only possible in certain geographical conditions; or if the economic, social, and political problems that invariably arise out of a prolonged war should result later in all going wrong which at the outset went well.

During the Napoleonic regime the human factor was in every circumstance the predominant one, and for this very reason the art of war reached a stage in which freedom became a military factor of supreme importance. The growth of democracy in Europe is therefore traceable in a high degree to military necessity. Some years ago Fuller raised the question whether, all things considered, the ultimate and deepest roots of modern democratic institutions in Europe may not be found in the legislation passed by the French revolutionaries which obliged every citizen to serve in the army. This is certainly going too far. Yet it provides a motive for giving greater consideration to the inner meaning of the legislation enacted for the building up of the French army and the reaction upon European society. We have, however, to deal not only with the primary conditions which contributed to Napoleon's successes

beginning with the first steps which have led mankind to wage total war. In 1914 we are experiencing for the second time within the space of twenty-five years. Our account of the transformation in the realm of warfare which the French revolution brought in its train is mainly based on the writings of Hans Delbrück. Here in their broad outline and without going into details are the essential facts.

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Before the French revolution war, like everything else, was the business of the authorities and not of the subjects. As long as there was no fighting in their own locality, the subjects hardly noticed that there was a war on at all. Eighteenth-century armies consisted, apart from minor differences, of professional soldiers (mainly officers) filled with the traditional chivalric ideals of honour and loyalty, and of foreign mercenaries who had been forced into service for various reasons. From 1733 onwards in Prussia the sons of farmers, too, were pressed into the ranks. Such service, however, was looked upon by the community as a disgrace and a misfortune. This feeling was not only due to the fact that so many foreigners were enlisted who, as Scharnhorst the Prussian army reformer has pointed out, were nothing better than 'tramps, drunkards, thieves, rascallions, and other persons of criminal type', but also because an army could be kept together only by a harsh and degrading discipline. 'No soldier was as mercilessly flogged as those in the Prussian army and no army has achieved less', wrote Scharnhorst. Desertion was customary. War historians assure us that we to-day do not realize what an important part such habitual desertions played in the past. In these circumstances it was essential to keep the units in very close contact whether they were on the march, or resting, or in camp. Since the bulk of the subjects were expected not to notice their king's activities, it was not practicable to billet the soldiers and to nourish them from the land, thus feeding the war by the war. These armies of mercenaries had, therefore, to be provisioned from depots and to carry with them in supply carts enough bread to suffice their needs for eighteen days; each man, in addition, had a three-day ration in his kit.

The army of feudal times was, therefore, a cumbrous organism. It became more so on account of the luxurious living of the officers. They were men of noble birth who had no desire to mix with the rank and file.

For this reason they differentiated themselves by the splendour of their equipment. In Prussia a lieutenant had both a saddle-horse and a pack-horse. Officers of higher rank possessed even more. The army had to drag in its train a number of carriages and wagons which were of no use whatsoever in the waging of war. With an army composed of such heterogeneous elements, it was essential to fight in close formation. The units were kept together man with man in action as well as during the march or in camp. In the course of the French revolution this kind of army organization was abolished at the same time as the feudalism and absolutism which were its progenitors.

The improvised revolutionary army did not develop a new technique from a preconceived plan. But the people's army could no longer make use of the old technique because of insufficient training. When conditions became stabilized and a new, modern army discipline was introduced, the old technique was given a trial. But in the meantime an unconscious and more effective technique was discovered. During the war of American independence the new 'civilian' tactics were used for the first time by an untrained militia and proved highly successful. The American troops did not play into the English army's hands by fighting in close formation on the plains. They broke up into mobile groups of skirmishers and took cover in the woods. What the Americans began was completed by the French in military matters as well as in other ways.

The ousted rulers of France endeavoured to hinder the triumph of the new era by mobilizing the feudal powers of Europe against the revolution. The intricate wars which ensued only served to increase the volume of the revolutionary waves. The representatives of the old regime at home and abroad had to be got rid of once and for all. While the guillotine was busy in Paris, the revolutionary armies invaded Savoy, the Rhineland, and the Netherlands.

In 1792 Pitt, England's leading statesman, declined to participate in the first onslaught made by the reactionary powers upon revolutionary France. He believed in a lasting peace and reduced the strength of the British army. It was, however, impossible for Great Britain to permit a strong continental power to establish itself on the Flemish coast. Britain went to war, not for the first nor for the last time, for this very reason. A threat to the English principle of the balance of power in Europe and to the commercial and colonial position of Great Britain throughout the

world was invariably enough to arouse the nation. In later days there was far more at stake. The French were talking of razing the modern Carthage to the ground — much the same as people, especially in Italy, were talking recently. During the Napoleonic campaigns the comparison was in vogue among the English educated classes, but they considered themselves to be Rome and not Carthage. London, however, did not destroy Paris. Besides, in other respects the comparison of the Napoleonic wars with the Punic wars is not a tenable one. If one is forced to draw a parallel, it would be in favour of British sea power. The Carthaginian general Hannibal set forth in 218 B.C. to take his revenge. He had 90,000 foot soldiers, 12,000 horsemen, and 37 elephants at his command. Why did he fail in the end to conquer Rome? Why was he forced to take the dangerous route across the Alps? Rear-Admiral Bruninghaus of the German navy answers these questions in a military encyclopaedia published in 1938. 'Hannibal's attack failed because Rome, having retained her navy, cut all communications throughout the western Mediterranean, thus threatening the motherland of Carthage. He was therefore forced to operate from Spain. Furthermore, Rome's naval supremacy enabled her under cover of her fleet to transfer her armies in such a way that they made contact with Hannibal before he had subjugated the plains of the Po. Even tactical errors on the part of the Romans could not alter the issue of this struggle.'

What the Mediterranean was in the days of Hannibal, the Atlantic Ocean was in the days of the French revolution. The power which held sway over it could alone be justified in feeling like Rome. The parallel would have been correct had the other powers compared themselves to Hannibal, who failed after a hard and long struggle. Most historians of sea warfare draw the comparison correctly. The bold and generous strategy of Hannibal was unable to make a stand against sea power, just as was the case with Napoleon.

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Looking back on historical events we can now see that at the historic moment of England's entry into the war of the European revolution the possibilities of the new French strategy were already restricted before there was time for it to mature with Napoleon as its acknowledged master. Though this new strategy was capable of subjugating the whole European

continent it was incompetent to subjugate the sea and the highways of commerce. These were ruled by Britain and this fact sealed Napoleon's fate.

In the spiritual and social fields, too, England was able to oppose the strongest continental power with something altogether different from the forces which feudal Europe could muster. Her patriotism was older than that of resurgent France. In addition, she had possessed for a considerable time a relatively progressive constitution and was even at that date governed by a Prime Minister and a Cabinet responsible not only to the Crown but, which is far more important, to the independent judgment of the Commons. It has to be admitted that the middle classes and the weak and irresolute masses of industrial workers had but scant political influence. The surge of the French revolution gave them ample reason for demanding more freedom and equality. In spite of this, Pitt had the backing of public opinion during the war with France. The historian G. M. Trevelyan is right in declaring that England, though governed by Parliament, fought the war against French supremacy on the continent with greater determination and persistence than did the absolutist courts which, after challenging the Jacobins, took too hastily to their heels and ran away.

The Prussian officers who had been longing for a campaign against France and thought it would be a walk-over were disillusioned even after the first battles. But France did not develop her new army organization to the full until the revolutionary wars were well on the move. On February 24th, 1793, the National Assembly decided to do away with the system of voluntary enlistment and to introduce conscription. Also, it was agreed that a call to arms of 300,000 men would be issued at once. In August, Captain Carnot, by then a deputy, became Minister of War and, owing to his mass levy, universal military service was born. In differing forms this has continued to our own day, and in England is resorted to in times of war. But it is the very foundation stone of modern armies.

Another innovation introduced by the constitution was that commissioned rank should no longer be reserved for a particular class. One standard of promotion alone was the rule: efficiency. Thus there arose from the ranks some of the greatest strategists of the nineteenth century.

On January 1st, 1794, the French army consisted of 770,000 men. No army of mercenaries had ever been on such a scale and none was filled

with the same spirit of enthusiasm. 'The ideas of liberty, equality, and home defence', writes Delbrück, 'lost nothing of their pristine vigour because the voluntary system had been replaced by conscription.'

This new army did not need any automatic disciplinary measures to keep it together as was the case with the old-time armies of mercenaries. The line formation of fighting could, therefore, be abandoned, and a more mobile technique introduced. Another factor was the new relationship of the officers to the men. Officers' baggage had to be restricted to what was deemed strictly necessary. Together with the luxury equipment of officers, the baggage train was likewise considerably reduced. The rank and file, too, when defending their country imposed upon themselves many hardships which mercenaries would have found intolerable. Whereas every Prussian infantry regiment was followed by sixty pack-horses laden with tents, the French discarded them and slept in the open. In 1793 the Prussian military authorities were still discussing such things as whether the infantry should march seventy-five instead of seventy-six steps to the minute, what sort of rules applied to pigtails, and in which way swords must be worn — all these ridiculous matters being seriously discussed in the very midst of the revolutionary wars. The French army of the revolution, however, had done away with similar trivialities.

The mobility of the French army was enormously increased by doing away with the system of provisioning the troops from depots. Also there were no desertions. While awaiting the arrival of a supply column in 1757, Frederick the Great wrote: 'On it rests the last hope of the state.' Delbrück says quite rightly that such words would have been impossible in Napoleon's mouth. Since the wars of the revolution were the concern of the whole people, the army could live on the produce of conquered territory. Owing to the fact that the cultivation of potatoes had increased in the second half of the eighteenth century, it became far easier to supply these mass-armies with provender directly from the land itself.

The French revolution created the sociological conditions for a strategy of which the principal aim was the annihilation of all opposing forces and, when required for the achievement of political purposes, the full occupation of enemy territory. This strategy of annihilation, however, though practicable in times of old and in other forms, was not feasible in the epoch which ended with the French revolution. Delbrück sums up the matter remarkably well when he writes: 'The armies of the old

monarchies were too small, their tactics too clumsy, their structure too unreliable for the successful carrying out of these principles when it came to actual warfare. They were pinned down to positions which on account of tactical difficulties they were unable to attack, and they could not outflank the enemy because they had to drag along the whole commissariat with them. They could venture only on the invasion of small parts of enemy territory, for the lines of communication with headquarters had to be kept open at any cost. Napoleon freed himself from such shackles. From the outset his aim was to put the enemy forces out of action. This was with him a question of tactics. Having got the enemy where he wanted him to be, he pursued his advantage until victory was his and the foe surrendered to the conditions he imposed.'

Napoleon gained strength by breaking down feudalism in France; he owed his victories to the persistence of feudalism in the rest of Europe. So long as the new era had not dawned in other lands, Napoleon had no stirring ideas or powerful armies to contend with. In 1796, Lieutenant Thielman, who later rose to the rank of general, wrote home disconsolately from the front: 'The time is near at hand when the great nation we are now fighting will prescribe laws for us and dictate peace terms. How can one fail to admire such a nation?'

The Napoleonic armies won battle after battle. Then, in the spring of 1797, having beaten all Great Britain's European allies, Napoleon proclaimed rather prematurely that he was now ready to turn his full strength against England. Easier said than done! Though the swords England had made use of on the continent were lying broken on the battlefields, along the shores of the English Channel new strategic problems arose. Could Napoleon's sword reach the British Isles? It never entered the head of the British lion to give up the fight. He accepted his isolation — and not for the last time — without losing his composure. So far as the continent was concerned, Napoleon enjoyed a privileged position. And had he been content to restrict his activities to the continent, Great Britain would have been indulgent and he would not have died a prisoner of the British on St. Helena. In his contest with British sea power, Napoleon no longer held the most advantageous position. Even when he dictated the laws of warfare, the British bulldog was at his heels. It was British sea power which prescribed the blows it was intending to strike at French continental strategy.

From the military point of view, Napoleon dominated ever vaster areas of the continent. But from the economic standpoint, though Great Britain could not hope to starve France, she held the reins through her sea power. Although in certain cases something resembling a blockade had been resorted to, there had never been a serious attempt to carry out such a policy. The Europe of those days was, as far as the more important provisions were concerned, self-supporting. In certain lands there was even a pretty lively export of grain and other products. But at this epoch, before railways had been laid down, seagoing vessels played an important part in European continental trade. This became obvious in the winter of 1793-94 when, in consequence of a bad harvest, famine broke out in France. Eastern Europe might have saved the situation, but the blockade imposed by Britain cut France off from all means of provisioning herself. Nevertheless, in its struggle with British sea power the continent still possessed an advantage, because North American neutrality was benevolent to France and antagonistic to Great Britain. Later on, when Napoleon ordered the return of Louisiana and the old French colonies to the French empire, North America reacted in such a way that she nearly joined forces with England in the struggle against Napoleon. America did not appreciate the idea of having the strongest European military power inhabiting her own house. She protested and Napoleon, being at the time in a precarious position, yielded on the issue. He sold Louisiana to America in 1803. But as a result of the British blockade, he was granted the inestimable pleasure of seeing, from 1812-14, the Anglo-Saxon powers at one another's throats again. Another continental power in our own times has envied him this satisfaction.

In 1794, thanks to the benevolent neutrality of America, an immense convoy of one hundred ships sailed with grain from the far shores of the Atlantic to relieve the famine which was causing such distress in France. Though the English failed to capture the vessels, the first and only clash between the republican and British fleets took place. The French suffered a crushing defeat which during the years that followed had far-reaching effects on the sea war.

This was already manifest at the time when Napoleon was making his preparations for the invasion of England in 1797. In the autumn of that year he said: 'Let us concentrate all our efforts upon the fleet and destroy England. Then Europe will be at our mercy.' This invasion seemed to be

the shortest way to achieve victory but, owing to British sea power, it was the most difficult. The French were not in an unfavourable strategical position to launch such an offensive. Just as Germany during the first World War was compelled to realize that her fleet, though a comparatively large one, was in an unfavourable strategic position in German waters and therefore could not assert herself against Great Britain, so in earlier times Napoleon was forced to admit that even if his general strategical position was an advantageous one, he could do nothing against British sea power unless he were backed by a fleet of equivalent proportions.

It is a remarkable fact that while the French revolution was forging superior weapons for land warfare it had to a large extent disregarded and neglected the fleet as a weapon wherewith to wage war. Naval ratings played an important part in the Russian and German revolutions of 1917 and 1918. So, too, did their predecessors during the French revolutionary epoch. As early as 1790, no ship could put to sea without the consent of the crews who manned them. The officers were not treated in any too friendly a fashion, for they belonged predominantly to the aristocracy and were looked upon as supporters of the *ancien régime*. By 1791, not less than three-quarters of French naval officers had abandoned their posts. Undoubtedly the revolution, had it been given time, would have proved a creative force in this field as in so many others. But sea power is not a thing that can be improvised. It was impossible to build up at short notice both a great land army and a naval force — as has been the case with National Socialist Germany in contemporary times. But Napoleon did not lose hope of constraining England into submission by the tactics of invasion. After inspecting the Channel coasts, he ordered that all necessary preparations should go ahead so that his bold plan might be realized. He had at his disposal not only the experience gained by pre-revolutionary France in her struggle against England, but likewise the lessons learned from the weak and unimportant attempts to land made in the course of 1797.



When to-day we read what Europeans at that time were thinking and discussing we get the impression that we are looking out of one of our own windows. The newspapers reported the most fantastic stories and in France the most astounding plans were being made. On November 27th,

1797, the *Vossische Zeitung* contained an article to the effect that, among the numerous schemes for invasion, the one outlined by the physicist Thilerier was the best. If it could be realized, British naval power and all the fortifications along the English coast would be rendered useless. What was this ingenious idea? In the first place a balloon was to be made which would be capable of carrying Napoleon and his entire army across the Channel, thus enabling them to land in the very heart of England. The writer in the *Vossische Zeitung* laid stress on the fact that Thilerier (who, by the way, was not a physicist but a lawyer) took his notion extremely seriously and expressed his willingness to put it into execution for less money than it would cost to equip a whole flotilla. Another dreamer suggested the use of a kind of submarine which, all unobserved and immediately, would be able to transfer four thousand troops over to England. Others put forward the idea of digging a tunnel under the Channel. Yet another worthy suggested that a propaganda balloon be sent and the enemy bombarded with revolutionary concepts of liberty so that England would be disrupted from within by riots and mutiny. This last idea was, perhaps, the most realistic of all though far too optimistic. The notion of a propagandist balloon is characteristic of the dawn of a new era in which war becomes a peoples' war and, therefore, a war of social ideas.

Napoleon was perfectly right when he wrote in 1798: 'We can do whatever we like. But for years to come we shall not achieve naval supremacy and the control of the seas. Without this, any landing on English soil will be an extremely valiant but dangerous exploit.'

The question arises whether victory could have been achieved if Napoleon had made a successful invasion. As matters were at that time, the answer might have been in the affirmative. In his *History of War at Sea*, Rear-Admiral Meurer answers the question with a qualified 'yes', but he is careful to add that such questions are wrongheaded because a successful invasion can only be based on naval supremacy and this Napoleon did not possess. What Napoleon could have done, says Meurer, was at least to have 'in those parts of the sea between the point of embarkation and the point where he intended to land his forces' a supremacy which would have enabled him to carry out his plan, 'and that not merely during the period when the manœuvre was going on but for the duration of the campaign'. The author, whose work was published in 1925, adds: 'Now,

owing to modern armament, invasion of a well-defended coast is hardly practicable. In former days, even in Napoleonic times, such was not the case.' Still, even at that epoch, and in any circumstances, naval supremacy was essential for such an attempted invasion. But Meurer deems that invasion is quite unnecessary for the conquest of Great Britain, for 'as soon as sea power is achieved, it automatically secures advantages to every enemy of England, ruining her trade, cutting her world-wide communications, and bringing to her the loss of her colonial empire. An England defeated at sea would even in Napoleon's day have had to sue for peace without any invasion, the results of which would in any case have been dubious. Still more does this apply to-day'.



Napoleon could not beat England at sea and, therefore, was unable to invade her. Out of four theoretical possibilities for brushing aside the last obstacle to his ambitions and forcing the British to sue for peace, there remained to him but two. First, the threat to British overseas possessions or, rather, to wrench them away by force of arms. Secondly, the struggle against British export trade which, as retaliation for the blockade imposed by Great Britain, had been pursuing its course since the wars began. Now it assumed an increasingly violent form. But in the attempt to reach his goal by such means, Napoleon was driven to further conquests and direr acts of violence. In his work *The Foreign Policy of the Great Powers in Modern Times*, the German historian Windelband aptly remarks: 'Napoleon was impelled onwards because that was the only way he could inflict loss on England. Because he forged ahead, his foes won to themselves ever fresh allies. He moved in a vicious circle.' As far as his fight against English export trade was concerned, this was not merely due to the needs of war but—and Winkelmann confirms this—it was an essential feature of the protectionist economic policy which Napoleon inherited, among other things, from the old regime. He not only intended to strike a blow at England but at the same time to enrich France and to win by force what he could not win by free competition, namely, control of the European market by French industrialists. It was, therefore, impossible for Napoleon to wage war on Great Britain as the leader of Europe—though he tried to do so over and over again. Not only had he to rid the world of English competition, but of every sort of competition, in order

that France might assume a privileged position. The contradiction in his actions grew more and more obvious and it became increasingly easy for Great Britain to win over new allies. In practice, neither of these trends can be separated from one or the other. But supposing that to have been possible, the economic, strategic, and other difficulties imposed upon Napoleon would have sufficed in the end to bring about his downfall.

What, for instance, could he have done with the armies gathered along the Channel coast when it became evident that an invasion was out of the question? He had to strike at the English somewhere. Pressure was further brought to bear because it was essential for him, 'by achieving wider and wider successes on the battlefield, to rouse enthusiasm for his person, since every period of inaction meant loss of personal prestige and danger to himself', Winkelmann writes. Undoubtedly political developments in France as well as economic and strategic pressure were at the back of his mind when he decided radically to change his course and, waving aside the possibility of invasion, to embark on his Egyptian campaign. His fleet being so weak, he could not prevail against the ocean, but after conquering Italy he had good reason to hope that he would obtain mastery of the Mediterranean. A severe blow might thus have been dealt at Great Britain, for she would have lost her lucrative trade with the Levant. France would have profited thereby. He also saw a chance of recuperating French losses in the matter of colonial possessions, losses due to the superiority of British sea power and which came about while French armies were gaining great victories on the continent of Europe. Napoleon did not ignore the fact that his empire, deprived of overseas resources, ran the risk of falling to pieces from exhaustion. He made most careful preparations for the utilizing of Egyptian economic resources as quickly as was feasible. The conquest of Egypt was to serve yet another purpose and one he had for some time been pondering: it would provide a base from whence he could march in Alexander the Great's footsteps to the conquest of India.

It is said that Napoleon declared the European continent to be too small for great deeds. This may be the reason why, during his struggle with Great Britain, Alexander inspired him more than any other person in history — that young Macedonian king who set forth in 334 B.C. to conquer Asia, who passed through Asia Minor, Palestine, Persia, and India as far as the Indus. Alexander and Napoleon had much in common, for both

of them were great army leaders, both were restless, ambitious, insatiable, both created an empire destined to be ephemeral, both with their armies had stood beside the Pyramids, and both were, after remarkable victories, forced to make a tragic retreat during which the one was tortured by sweltering heat while the other was blistered by withering cold and both had a narrow escape from death. Historians are not in agreement as to what could have induced Alexander to march on India, whereas Napoleon's dream of being able to shake the foundations of the British Empire by a conquest of India which, after the loss of the vast American colonies, was England's dearest possession, has never been denied.

Realizing the unconquerable nature of British sea power, Napoleon like a second Alexander dreamed of a march to the East. The same dream was pursued by Imperial as well as National Socialist Germany in later days. This is no mere coincidence, for in the matter of India no less than in the battles for Egypt the same thing recurs every time a continental power comes into conflict with British naval supremacy. Napoleon, William II, Hitler, and Mussolini have all made abortive attempts to overthrow this power and it has invariably been British naval supremacy which has decided the issue, in spite of the fact that battles have raged on the continent and now rage in the air.



Having realized that an invasion of England was beyond his power to achieve, Napoleon turned his attention to Egypt, making much ado about the campaign in order to keep his plans secret and to mislead the British fleet. Single handed, he accomplished what it took in our own times two powers to achieve. Despite the disadvantage under which he laboured, he solved his problem in a masterly way. While continuing to make his preparations for an invasion in the north with as great a display as possible, he was quietly and secretly making far more serious preparations along the shores of the Mediterranean. He succeeded in hiding his intentions and thus deceiving the British, who were 'as always very much afraid of an invasion and were prepared for it', as Meurer says quite rightly. In the Germany of William II, both army and naval commanders, being well aware of British naval superiority, never contemplated an invasion of Great Britain, though some German jingoes already saw German troops marching through English streets. But caution on the part of the British

in the case of Napoleon was fully justified. In the absence of unremitting preparedness, without the organization of large militia forces, an invasion might quite possibly have taken place in the Napoleonic epoch, for the element of surprise plays an important part in large-scale operations. .

Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, however, goes to prove that surprise attack is not invariably successful. True, the Corsican landed a force of 36,000 men from four hundred transport vessels covered by fifteen war-ships on an undefended coast near Alexandria after seizing Malta on the way. But within a month Nelson destroyed the French fleet at Abukir. Two French ships alone escaped, and had it not been that Nelson was severely wounded those two ships would never have sailed the high seas again. Napoleon and his army were thus cut off from home. By a twist of good luck he managed later on to evade the British fleet and return to France. In 1801 the expeditionary force surrendered to the British, though meanwhile it had added many a glorious victory to its renown. It had pressed on as far as Akka, but here was brought to a halt. Stubborn resistance was offered by the Turks who, encouraged by Nelson's victory at Abukir, turned against the French. Egypt at that time was a Turkish possession. By attacking Great Britain through Egypt, Napoleon unwittingly sacrificed his country's time-honoured friendship with the Ottoman Empire and compelled the Turks to take up arms against him. The Russian colossus, too, pricked up its ears, for Napoleon's adventure into Egypt menaced its own interests in the Orient. At this juncture an historical event of the utmost importance took place. The Russian fleet was permitted to pass through the Dardanelles. The British fleet, being in control of the seaways, was able to land troops wherever seemed most advantageous and to provide them with stores and arms. In alliance with Turkey it forced Napoleon to withdraw. His men were tortured by thirst and sickness. Until the end of his days, Napoleon deplored the failure of his plans in the Orient. 'Had I but succeeded in taking Akka', he said while in captivity on St. Helena, 'I would have marched as far as India.' In view of his vast schemes, he had already opened negotiations with Indian rebels and, in order to put his ideas into effect, he had seriously considered the possibility of constructing the Suez canal. But just as British sea power drove him of necessity towards eastern conquests, so it was again British naval supremacy which shattered all his plans.

Great as were the consequences of Napoleon's defeat on his strategic position, they were even more profound in regard to the political situation. Apart from the animosity he had aroused among the Turks, he now found that Austria, the kingdom of Naples, and Russia had rallied against him. The Corsican was not, after all, invincible. Napoleon was constrained to threaten and exploit Europe in order to keep French minds occupied and exhilarated, to finance his military exploits, to provide for his armies, to carry on the economic war against Great Britain. And it was for these very reasons that England found more and more people joining her in her lone fight. Time was on her side: she could afford to wait. In the last resort, because she had command of the sea she likewise possessed wealth. Thus she was able at the right moment to start explosions in the European powder-magazine as soon as Napoleon's policy of oppression became manifest. Furthermore, she had it in her power to make trade for Napoleon's vassal states so difficult as to become impossible. On the other hand, Napoleon's fighting strength was still so mighty that he succeeded again and again in destroying European coalitions and imposing humiliating peace terms.

It sometimes happens that in great historic circumstances even the deadliest of foes become friends. In 1800, Paul I of Russia thought to himself: 'As an adversary on the field of battle, Napoleon is dangerous. He has been victorious always and everywhere. May it not be that he is less dangerous as a friend and ally? So why fight one another if there is something we can share between us?' He was thinking at the time of Turkey. The tsar, therefore, broke with the coalition when Napoleon, using a certain leaven of flattery, offered him his friendship in a very generous way. Why should not the Corsican have acted in this wise? He was encompassed by enemies. A submissive Russia would be prepared to join issue with him in his economic war against Great Britain. In any case, an alliance with the tsarist empire was a more opportune move on Napoleon's part than to wage war on the colossus. Furthermore, an alliance with Russia opened up other possibilities. He could threaten the British empire from Russia and start a campaign towards India. After his many defeats at sea there seemed to be no other course if he were to reach his goal of imposing a thorough embargo on British goods while at the same time threatening the most precious of English possessions by his occupation of Russian soil. Napoleon saw in the alliance with

tsarist Russia an ultimate triumph in the economic and strategic fields.

Great efforts were made by Britain to cut France off from provisions by way of the Baltic. Such efforts are readily understandable. Supplies, especially timber for the construction of ships, constituted a very important item in carrying on the war. Another cargo, that of wheat, was to be made as difficult as possible to convey to France, for though the country could supply its own needs fairly well, Paris was always inclined to run short of bread and the cry was constantly raised: 'We want a government which can provide us with food.' Russia, however, wished to sell her grain and other wares. Thus continually there arose acrimonious disputes between her and Great Britain who, for her part, was naturally looking after totally different interests seeing that she was engaged upon unremitting warfare on the high seas. Paul therefore chose this moment to inaugurate a League of Neutrals in which Denmark, owing to her geographical key position, played an important role. In addition, the tsar agreed to participate in the embargo on British goods, which doubled the advantages already enjoyed by France. Lastly, Paul equipped an expeditionary force for the campaign on India. Towards the end of February 1801, his expeditionary force started on its march to India. But it had to be recalled owing to the occurrence of other events. His ineptitude in everything he undertook was extraordinary.

It was during this period that Great Britain, once more completely isolated, had to face the most serious crisis of the war against Napoleon. The fulfilment of his dreams seemed about to be realized and outwardly glorious days were still in store for him. Though disturbed and anxious, Great Britain did not lose her head. Soon the whole world was to look with kindlier eyes upon the island realm.

An ideological antagonism naturally existed between the tsar and the great son of the French revolution. But the economic and political interests of the Russian empire ran counter to the trend of her statesmen who asked themselves whether Paul's actions might not be considered as playing with fire. Unfriendly relations existed, it is true, between Russia and Great Britain, and this not solely on account of sea warfare. But, it was asked, were the interests of the Russian dynasty and of the nation as a whole properly served by such close submission to the will of Napoleon? Was it politic to forgo trading with the British Isles merely in the end to have French armies trampling Russian earth and to help towards the

ultimate triumph of the Corsican? Would a victorious France remember her friendship with the tsar? Could two such mighty empires exist in concord side by side with one another? What would Russia do if the Corsican, after defeating the British empire, launched an attack on Russia? And if Great Britain were destroyed, to whom could Russia turn for an alliance?

Paul was assassinated in March 1801. This event was a godsend to Great Britain, and England may have had a hand in the affair, though her part was not of such vast importance as Tarle would have us believe. The murder was due far more to Paul's foreign policy than to his domestic policy. This is stressed by the fact that within six days of the tsar's death no fewer than seventy-eight Russian generals were dismissed. Moreover, Paul's son, Alexander, who succeeded the murdered man, received threatening letters reminding him of his father's fate which was laid at the door of his friendship with Napoleon. The rapid fluctuations in Russian foreign policy during those times from mortal enmity to everlasting friendship and from everlasting friendship to mortal enmity were not based so much on Napoleon's sense of the tsar's irresponsibility as upon the momentary balance of power in Europe. In spite of changes in the form of her government, strains have been recurrent factors in Russia's foreign policy at specific historical moments. In our own time, Russia has shown a tendency to be of two minds in her dealings with the strongest continental power. Such facts cannot be understood without giving due consideration to these issues. The cancellation of aid to France and the recall of the expeditionary force by Alexander I was not in the first instance due to Paul's assassination so much as to the indecision of Russian statesmen. What, they asked themselves, was the proper course to adopt in relation to foreign policy? British sea power proved most effective in disrupting the dangerous alliance between the two greatest continental countries. By the end of March, the British fleet was in Danish waters to enforce the abandonment of Denmark's armed neutrality. Early in April this strategically important, though from the point of view of international law somewhat delicate, task was fulfilled and the Danish navy eliminated. Thus Great Britain resumed her domination of the Sound, opening up the sea route to Russia and St. Petersburg. These facts could not remain without influence upon Alexander. Although the new tsar had not completely severed connections with France, Napoleon was faced with an

entirely new situation. For the time being, none of the four theoretical means for defeating Britain could materialize. The destruction of British sea power had proved impossible; invasion of her coasts was out of the question; the march upon India was ruled out; and the commercial ruin of England by the continental blockade had always been rather a problematical affair. Now that the Sound had been reopened and Franco-Russian relations had taken an unfavourable turn, the idea of ruining British trade and commerce by the blockade became even more dubious.

No sooner had the United Kingdom gained mastery of the Sound than France was completely cut off from her eastern imports. Meurer remarks that it was on the cards 'whether Napoleon by making peace with England might not have overcome the growing economic difficulties which confronted him'. Of course such a peace would hardly have sufficed to solve his problems. But what other advantage remained to the Corsican? He was still undisputed master of the continent and, for the time being, there seemed no likelihood of Great Britain forming fresh alliances against Napoleon. British trade more than doubled during the war, and it was in the interests of the commercial and industrial classes that so profitable a war should continue. Meanwhile the energetic Pitt was turned out of office and a new government hoped it would be possible to settle the war in reasonable fashion. Napoleon offered a peace the terms of which the British accepted. The Treaty of Amiens was signed in 1802.

Soon Pitt's prophecy that such a peace would prove worse than an armistice was to be fulfilled. 'All too soon', writes the historian Trevelyan, 'it became obvious that Napoleon interpreted the Treaty of Amiens as meaning that England should withdraw behind her sea wall while leaving Napoleon at liberty to occupy any continental countries he coveted.' Not for a moment did Napoleon lose sight of his aims. When in 1803 Great Britain stood in his path, he again declared war on her. Pitt was convinced that in this titanic struggle there was no room for compromise and that therefore the British government should never have accepted Napoleon's peace. Pitt's attitude was thoroughly justified and he once again took the helm of state into his competent hands.

No sooner had the war started anew than Great Britain placed an embargo on all French ports, thus at one blow depriving France of her shipping, her trade, and her colonies. From the start Napoleon had

to wage war on the open seas if he were to stand a chance of gaining supremacy. There was no alternative course available to him. In his perplexity he reverted to his old plans of invasion — those drawn up in 1797-98. He meant to strike a decisive blow at the very heart of England. Napoleon had missed no opportunity of strengthening his navy. But in this he was handicapped. A French admiral complained that money, clothing, hammocks, and most other things were lacking. In spite of Napoleon's wonderful organizing ability, the dockyards, ships, crews, and administration were not equal to the demands made upon them. He who had shown such genius in discovering fresh talents in his land army was content to retain the admirals of the old regime at their posts in the navy. This failure on his part cannot merely be explained by the difficulties he encountered in trying to improvise a powerful fleet, but lay in the fact that he who had done so much with land armies showed a total lack of understanding as to the nature of sea warfare. Otherwise he never would have said: 'Let me be master of the Channel but for one day and England will be at my mercy.' The catastrophe which attended the Egyptian campaign should have taught him that naval supremacy obtained by cunning over a restricted area for a few hours or days is no supremacy at all. It is obvious that Napoleon learned nothing from this experience. Yet what other foundation remained whereon to build his hopes in case invasion once more proved impossible?

Since the summer of 1803, Napoleon had waited with feverish impatience for his fleet to put to sea. But always new preparations were deemed essential and always was action postponed. Any hope of a surprise attack had long since been abandoned. The English could not ignore the preparations he was making both at sea and in France. Nor could secrecy be maintained when along the French coasts of the Channel 130,000 men were being mustered and trained, and a vast assembly of ships and 2300 landing barges were present. Action at all costs must be ventured. Napoleon had by now become emperor and he knew very well that the imperial crown would never rest securely on his head unless he conquered the island realm. In July 1805 he issued orders that all the units of his fleet were to assemble in the Channel. During the previous year he had succeeded in persuading Spain to co-operate with France. This move not only rendered the blockade against Britain more effective but added a considerable number of ships to his navy. Holland, too, had

been forced into an alliance with him. This, likewise, did not only procure strategical advantages, but furthermore increased his naval strength. In spite of his endeavours his navy remained no more comparable with the British than the British army could be compared with Napoleon's land forces. Great Britain not only had more and better ships, but her crews, admirals, and strategy were superior. Captain Schulz, writing in 1936, tells us that the French admirals lacked initiative and were constrained to execute manifold orders at Napoleon's command. The British showed themselves to be far cleverer than their opponents. The admirals who commanded the British fleet certainly did not lack initiative and those who issued orders from home possessed a more intimate knowledge of sea warfare than did Napoleon whose native element was land.

Napoleon's notion that were he given command of the channel but for a single day he could best Great Britain was fantastic enough. Yet even more fantastic was the way he set about trying to secure a commanding position. The plan he drew up was that his squadrons from Toulon and Rochefort should endeavour to slip through the British blockade without engaging the enemy and then make for the West Indies where they should join one another. His speculations were based upon the idea that, once the French fleet had reached the West Indies, the British would follow and force the issue, whereupon the French would return to the Channel in order to assist in the landing of the armies of assault. While all this was in progress, twenty men-of-war stationed at Brest would convey 18,000 men over to Ireland and return to Boulogne to cover the landing operations and, if possible, transport another 20,000 men from Holland to Ireland. The plan failed utterly. So did yet another plan which in principle resembled the first. The British Admiralty, recognizing that the manœuvre was merely a diversionary one, did not oblige Napoleon by falling into the trap and allowing him his single day of mastery over the Channel. On October 21st, 1805, Nelson with twenty-seven ships against the French and Spanish, who had mustered thirty-three, won the battle of Trafalgar during which the flower of the French and Spanish fleets was destroyed. The fleet which Napoleon had taken six years to build up had but ten ships left from the wreckage. Thus the victory of sea power over continental power was decided. Windelband is right in asserting that 'Trafalgar placed a seal on any endeavour to attack England from the sea. If we consider Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in the light of

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historical evolution, it will become obvious that this one victory annulled all the victories achieved by the emperor on the continent. It was not Austerlitz which decided the course of events to come, but Trafalgar. Napoleon, however, was far from admitting this terrible defeat as spelling finis to his activities and his plans for world dominion. But direct action against the British Isles was denied him for ever. He nursed megalomaniac ideas none the less and, in spite of his strength, these excessive and unrealizable schemes of his led to his destruction. Trafalgar was the turning-point in his fortunes. From October 21st, 1805, his decline began, though during the following years his deeds shone with super-ficial splendour'.

For the moment, Nelson's Trafalgar was overshadowed by Napoleon's Austerlitz. This grand victory of December 2nd, 1805, defeated another European coalition under British leadership which had sprung into existence to fight Napoleonic France. Napoleon imagined that he had now achieved what he was denied by means of invasion, namely, the capitulation of Great Britain. Despite appearances to the contrary, London remained unshaken.

Prussia had not joined the coalition and left the Russians and the Austrians to their fate. But she made an alliance with Napoleon after Austerlitz. The Corsican, however, could not tolerate a single German power to be in a position to render his own safety precarious. Thus, as soon as he felt strong enough for the enterprise, he dealt Prussia a crushing blow. Strangely enough, he expected the kingdom of Frederick the Great to put up a strong resistance. But things turned out otherwise and Prussia proved to be an easy prey. Prussia was still a feudalistic state and her army was quite inadequate to oppose the modern army raised by the French revolution. In spite of the fact that in previous years many attempts had been made to modernize the Prussian army, in practice nothing whatsoever had been done. When reforms were put in motion, it became obvious that their execution would mean a revolutionary upheaval, for at that period of time no modernization was possible without shaking the structure of state and society to its foundations. General Rüchel, one of the most inveterate antagonists of radical reform, furnished an apt explanation of Prussia's dilemma: 'Prussian military organization and political economy are venerable institutions. Were one link to be removed, the whole chain would be in danger of collapsing.'

For this very reason the militarized Prussian state was unable to become an up-to-date political power. While holding on mulishly to its obsolete privileges, it defied its patriotic reformers and was thus doomed to be defeated by the French. In the dual battle of Jena and Auerstadt, 1806, when Napoleon gave the *coup de grâce* to Old Prussia, there were among the seven to eight thousand officers in the Prussian army no more than 695 who were not of noble birth. Life for this handful of lower-class men was made insufferable because they had not the same social status as the majority of officers. The commoner, though he might be a man of good education, was despised the more because he represented the advance-guard of a new era. Before the battle of Jena, the recruitment of foreigners for the army had reached notable proportions. Most of the officers and N.C.O.s were too old for their job, and the political, social, and military system they represented was also out of date. Though Napoleon had no tanks, it took him a surprisingly short time to reach Berlin. Even fortified places like Spandau and Potsdam fell without a blow. No sooner were the French sighted than Küstrin and Stettin capitulated in spite of strong garrisons and ample stores. Similar events took place in many other towns. German historians show no pride in that period though many individual deeds of valour were performed.

Napoleon's armies did not stop at Berlin. They marched on towards the east. Alexander I, fully realizing the danger involved by the complete submission of Prussia, felt obliged to resume his share in the war. Napoleon had long expected this and utilized Polish national ambitions to foment trouble with the tsar. But in 1807, after Russia's tremendous defeat at Friedland, the war against the mortal enemy Napoleon the Antichrist was changed into an alliance. To the religiously minded Russian peasants, this show of amiability seemed a profound mystery. Not so very long before, the king of Prussia and the tsar of Russia had sworn everlasting loyalty to one another. Yet Alexander now tried to save himself as speedily as possible. Prussia was forced to accept the severe terms imposed by the Treaty of Tilsit (July 9th, 1807).

In spite of his dread of Napoleon, Alexander put forward certain claims. The invincibility of British sea power having been proved, there remained nothing for Napoleon but to hope that the continental blockade might prove effective and the march on India be successful. His relations with Russia became increasingly the pivot upon which was dependent both his

policies and his strategy. Why should not the great son of the French revolution embrace and bestow a kiss upon the tsar?

A man of Napoleon's stamp could have no scruples in acting on the principle that the end justifies the means. Unscrupulous actions were not foreign to Alexander either. Thus between the two of them they shared in the domination of Europe: Alexander in the east; Napoleon in the west. Finland, which the tsar wrested from the Swedes, fell a victim to this Franco-Russian alliance. The bartering of territories which took place at this time was ruthless, and the reigning princes were as indignant as they were silly and short-sighted.



Napoleon's respect for his tools was trifling. But even towards his adversaries, whose determination of character was undisputed, he failed in appreciation. First and foremost in his detestation came Freiherr vom Stein who, together with Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Boyen, Fichte and others, is associated in German minds with the great national uprising against the Napoleonic yoke. Vom Stein challenged the rulers of Prussia with the words: 'We shall derive no advantage from betraying our principles. We are held in universal contempt because of our lack of backbone.' Such talk was not at all to Napoleon's liking nor did it serve his purpose. While in captivity on the island of Elba, the Corsican remarked with his eye on the Germans: 'They came into my net like shy game and, no matter how shameful events might be, they looked upon everything as being somehow nice.' This is not true in respect of vom Stein and his congeners. After the collapse, Stein announced that the chains of bureaucracy should be broken, for they impeded human activity. The people, he maintained, needed the franchise and personal action was necessary if the nation was to be saved from an inferiority complex. Early in 1807, the king dismissed Stein with contumely, but because of the indignation this aroused among the people, he was soon returned to office. Stein started to lay the foundations of a new Germany and a new army by giving freedom to the peasantry and by granting self-government to the cities. This patriotic minister was filled with enthusiasm at the sight of the heroic struggle put up by the Spaniards against the greatest strategist and the mightiest military power in Europe at that epoch.

The guerrilla warfare which ensued was indeed formidable. The

Iberian peninsula became the graveyard of many an army. During the years 1807 to 1813, Napoleon sent over the Pyrenees for the conquest of Spain 670,000 men and 520 guns, out of which only 250,000 men and 220 guns returned to France at the close of the campaign. Clausewitz pointed out that such guerrilla warfare could not be carried out successfully unless the people were fired with a passionate love of freedom, an inordinate will to fight, iron physique, and ample supplies. In Spain all these conditions were present and, owing to the mountainous character of the country, the guerrillas were provided with perfect fighting terrain. The Spaniards were an isolated people at that time on account of their country's geographical position and its peculiar history. The absolutist authority of the Catholic Church led to cohesion and likewise to strength. In conjunction with national and even liberal ideas, the Church, when the state collapsed, stood the test in the hour of need.

The Spaniards regarded Napoleon not only as the conqueror of their mother country but also as a sacrilegious innovator and leader of atheism. Hatred for the Corsican was general throughout the land, though the underlying motives for such detestation were manifold and at times contradictory. During the rebellion, monks and priests played an especially important part. Certain members of the nobility were likewise filled with the spirit of resistance; but, taken as a whole, this class felt more inclined to submit than any other of its compatriots. To quote a report by the Prussian Colonel von Schepeler: 'The nobility loved their privileges better than the great issues which interested the nation.' This problem was not, however, confined to Spain.

A letter from Stein fell into Napoleon's hands. In this he discussed the advisability of Germany following the Spanish example. The king of Prussia dismissed his minister again but, this time, the dismissal was at Napoleon's personal orders. On December 16th, 1808, the Corsican summarily outlawed the baron. The Prussian squirearchy were secretly delighted at the removal of Stein. The reformers had to suffer imprecations, impertinent insinuations, and bitter attacks. The first tentative steps which were taken in order to establish compulsory military service proved to be impossible of execution because they infringed the ancient privileges of the Prussian nobility and gentry. The champions of the reform were suspected of revolutionary activities. Officers and generals of Frederick's army which so piteously collapsed on the battlefield of Jena were filled

with hatred for the army reformer Scharnhorst and called him a 'Jacobin' because he came of Hanoverian peasant stock. There was no more opprobrious name than that of Jacobin at the time. The Prussian general Marwitz charged the reformers with being 'crooks and traitors in the pay of the Jews'. The squirearchy could not reconcile itself to the fact that it would have to give up its autocratic rule. These Prussian Junkers were constantly petitioning the king and complaining that the Commission for Reorganization was about to inaugurate a 'Jewish state'. This attitude put an end to the plans of the reformers. Compulsory military service was unattainable because the higher classes of society felt that for them to mix with commoners in the ranks was unbearable. But when the hour struck and the Wars of Liberation began in good earnest, events brought about the triumph of the idea of compulsory military service. When the World War of 1914 started, the German army had just celebrated its centenary.



The low level to which the Prussian army had sunk in 1806, and the far-reaching reforms which had been introduced by 1813, is revealed by the fact that out of 143 generals who held commissions in 1806 there were but two left seven years later. True, there were 7000 officers in the Prussian army in 1806 and 4000 of them fought in the Wars of Liberation and had their share in the bloody victories. Nevertheless 'the fact remains that a new generation had arisen meanwhile. The essential thing to consider is not that the 4000 officers played their part in these wars but in what capacity they fought', writes Dr. Demeter in his valuable book *The German Officer Corps and its Historical Foundations*.

The reformers placed the most efficient and progressive elements among the Officers' Corps in the foreground. In addition, fresh blood was introduced as a result of the new regulations. Under the leadership of two men who were not of Prussian birth, namely Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, an announcement was made on August 6th, 1808. It began as follows:

'Henceforth a man is entitled to become an officer only if he has knowledge and education in times of peace, and has shown conspicuous gallantry and initiative on the battlefield. Therefore every individual in the national community who possesses these qualifications can aspire to the highest military posts. Within the framework of the army, all class

privilege is at an end. Everyone, regardless of birth, possesses identical rights and duties.'

The Treaty of Tilsit deprived Prussia of five and a quarter million of her inhabitants and she thus became a powerless buffer state between Napoleon's spheres of interest and those of the tsar. Napoleon permitted Prussia to have an army of no more than 42,000 men. But the Prussian army reformers knew what they had to do. Recruits, after a short term of service, were discharged, while these were secretly replaced by fresh troops. Thus in 1813, Prussia was able to put into the field 250,000 enthusiastic and thoroughly trained soldiers. In view of the armament technique of the day, it was an easy matter quickly to transform a willing man into an efficient warrior. Jahn's flourishing sport movement lent its aid because its members were filled with patriotic zeal. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and more especially since the first World War, the practice of sports has grown to be an important factor in the military policies of every nation.

But before the reformers were able to witness the results of their labours they suffered many an hour of despair. When, in 1809, Austria again rose against Napoleon, not a few Prussians felt bitter because their king could not make up his mind whether or not to take advantage of the chance. Many officers left the army in order to fight where their services were needed. For instance, General Grolman fought first in Austria and subsequently joined the Spanish guerrillas. On February 24th, 1812, Prussia signed a treaty pledging herself to give active help to Napoleon in any future war. This made the Prussians furious and the saying was prevalent: 'Everything is lost, even honour.' Blucher, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Boyen, Stein and others, placing their faith in the people, urged the necessity of taking up arms. But Frederick William III curtly refused to do anything which might involve him in 'a people's revolutionary war'. Just as in these our times General de Gaulle and innumerable fellow-officers of defeated countries continue to wage war alongside the United Nations, so in the Napoleonic epoch did Boyen and Clausewitz enter the Russian service. Clausewitz, though his studies on warfare have remained authoritative classics to this day, fell under the displeasure of his king who, even in 1813, obstinately refused to readmit him into the Prussian army. In similar fashion General de Gaulle, the leader of Fighting France, was expelled from the French Vichy army in spite of the fact that it was he who

saw most clearly the deficiencies in French armaments and strategy and had been striving with the utmost energy to overcome them. Another quality which Clausewitz and de Gaulle have in common is that, possessing a deeper understanding of the problems of warfare in their respective countries, they possess the spiritual strength which enables them to carry on the fight while the men of the old school, in both these historic moments, collapsed and with them their military ideas. Once defeated, neither to the men of Napoleon's day nor to those of ours was it always possible to make a show of personal dignity and thus maintain their prestige. Despite divergences of character, the events following upon the collapse of France in 1940 closely resemble the catastrophe which overwhelmed Prussia in 1806.



Never before in history had such a continental power as Napoleon's existed. Never had any sea power enjoyed so great a triumph as after Trafalgar. Never had there been an economic war of such magnitude as the one then being fought between Great Britain and France. Napoleon was well aware of the fact that, apart from the highly problematical march on India, there remained no available means to reach the goal he had set himself except a drastic pursuit of the economic war. On November 21st, 1806, he issued from Berlin his famous decree which established a blockade against the British Isles. In principle the decree was not an innovation, but as soon as Napoleon had gained mastery over the mainland, he felt confident that he could drive British trade away from Europe. Until that date there had always been gaps in the blockade through which British goods could find their way to a market. But just as a jug which has a hole in its bottom is no use as a container, so the blockade was no real blockade. The peoples of Europe did not feel any impetus to fill the gaps because they saw no reason why they should forgo the advantages which cheap and excellent British manufactures brought them, not to mention the wares which came from British colonies and the raw materials conveyed in English ships. We have to remember that the peoples of Europe did not consider that Napoleon's interests were identical with their own. If the gaps in the continental blockade were ever to be filled, it was essential to subjugate the various nations involved, to close the more vital of their ports, and to occupy their coasts. After Jena, the ancient commercial towns

of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck were occupied, and by this action Napoleon held in his grip the Weser, Oder, Weichsel, and all other arteries through which the economic life-blood of Germany circulated. By signing the Treaty of Tilsit, both Prussia and Russia had to submit to the embargo on British goods. Holland, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Austria after her defeat in 1809, were forced to participate in Napoleon's stranglehold on Great Britain's economic life. Henceforward all connections with Great Britain were to be severed. Even letters were prohibited. Every British citizen caught in an area occupied by French or allied troops was deemed a prisoner of war. Stores and goods, and all British properties on the continent were declared to be contraband and were liable to seizure.

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England, the birthplace of modern capitalism, had in the course of the eighteenth century gradually built up an industrial community, supplying the whole European continent with products of her manufacture which in the main consisted of hardware and textiles. Napoleon imagined that by cutting her off from the European markets, Great Britain, paralysed with her surplus stocks and shaken by economic and political crises, would be forced to surrender. Napoleon not only thought thus to destroy England's commerce with the continent but he seriously believed that he could ruin her colonial trade and put an end to all the sources of his enemy's revenues. The notion of debarring an entire continent from foreign trade gave birth to what is known as the continental system which it was his object to create.

He proposed to grow flax as a substitute for cotton, sugar-beet was to replace cane sugar, European dyes should be utilized instead of exotic ones. Wherever possible coal-mines must be bored and ironworks established. Whether the undertakings were profitable or not was a minor consideration. Priority had at all times to yield to the possibility of besting England and enriching France. The substitutes for colonial products are well known to us. For tobacco there were dried cherry or chestnut leaves, for coffee the people were to have chicory, dehydrated carrots, acorns, etc. In Denmark alone there were seventeen establishments engaged in the production of coffee substitutes. But there is a vast difference between the blockade of those days and the present one. Then it was England that had

to suffer the effects of the blockade. Now the British are blockading the continent. Then it was Great Britain that was to be cut off from the continent. Now it is Great Britain who is cutting off the continent from intercourse with the world without. Then it was Great Britain who was to be driven into submission because of a surplus of goods. Now it is the biggest continental power which is to be forced to her knees because of lack of essential commodities. To-day Germany's answer to Great Britain's blockade is the submarine and the airplane.

It is sometimes regarded as a blunder on Napoleon's part that he did not make imports from Europe to Great Britain impossible. In *The Continental System*, Professor Heckscher is in agreement with Meurer and others that some success might have been achieved in this sphere, for Great Britain had already ceased to be a self-supporting community and at times suffered from a shortage of foodstuffs. In opposition to what other critics of Napoleon's economic policy maintain, Professor Heckscher is of opinion that neither Great Britain nor the continental powers could have been defeated by a shortage of foodstuffs alone. As Napoleon observed: 'England could have procured grain from elsewhere had imports from Europe failed her.' Heckscher says that though the Corsican endeavoured to make such imports more difficult for England, his intention was not so much to starve out the British Isles as to see that supplies to France were not lacking. He also feared that exports to England would be reciprocated by imports from that country. On the other hand, part of the profit from imports went into Napoleon's treasury and were it for this reason alone the Corsican could not allow himself to be wholly consistent. Furthermore, he could only extort from other countries so long as there remained the wherewithal to do so. On the whole, therefore, it seemed wiser to allow Prussia and Russia to continue to export their surplus of agricultural produce. Nevertheless, in Memel for instance, immense stocks of timber were permitted to rot and the price of grain went down by 50 per cent and even 80 per cent between the years 1806-10 because it had become impossible to find a market. Contrasted with this state of things there was a shortage of essential raw materials, which brought in its train unemployment, pauperism, and vagabondage on a large scale. The ports were deserted. Though British goods still appeared on the market, they were smuggled goods and fetched an exorbitant price. Coffee, cocoa, sugar, pepper, and suchlike were eight to twelve times as expensive as they

had been before the blockade; dyestuffs, cotton, etc., rose fifty times higher.

Though Europe was far from starving, her prosperity dwindled perceptibly. Slowly but to an increasing degree, France felt the results of the blockade. She became more and more impoverished. This was due mainly to the policy of protection and the milliards of francs which the subjugated countries had to pay Napoleon in the form of contributions. World-embracing economic relations were hardly developed at all during the Napoleonic epoch, yet no country could live in a Europe which was not in harmony with the world at large. The exploitation of others reacted perniciously on the exploiters, and Bonaparte's military power was influenced by a far greater power, namely that of economic law.



Rear-Admiral Maltzahn once said: 'In the economic warfare between England and Napoleon people should have asked themselves whether it were possible to dominate the seas from the land or the land from the seas. History decided that the seas cannot be ruled from the land. Europe needed Great Britain more than Great Britain needed Europe, because Great Britain could send her bottoms across every ocean, whereas a blockaded Europe was completely cut off from any such form of activity. This weak spot in Napoleon's armour proved his undoing. What might he have achieved in the most favourable circumstances? Not more than the complete blockading of the continent. His power did not extend further and under certain conditions did not reach as far. Europe undoubtedly provided a good and convenient market for British wares, but it was not the only outlet for British manufactures. About one-third of Britain's output went to the continent before the continental system was imposed. Then, when smuggling became the sole means of shipping commodities to the continent, Great Britain increased her exports to Canada, the West Indies, Central America, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, the East Indies, and other places. In every instance, she acquired new markets and kept them and developed them when the war was over. Professor Heckscher is right in saying: "In this respect Napoleon was hopelessly impotent, for it was impossible to prevent for any length of time the power that commanded the seas of the world from exporting goods to other

continents. Even if the elimination of the continent of Europe as a market had been complete, which was far from being the case, the immediate effect would probably have been to hasten the economic orientation of Great Britain both from Europe and also, to a large extent, from the United States, to the rest of the world; and this orientation, as a matter of fact, has taken place gradually during the last hundred years and has formed one of the most significant changes in the position of Great Britain in the economy of the world.” (*The Continental System*, Oxford, 1922, p. 326.)

As far as exports were concerned, and much to Napoleon's chagrin, Great Britain adapted herself even better than could have been expected. Being in command of the Seven Seas, she got silk from China and the East Indies as well as from Italy. Though timber could not be procured from the Baltic States, in Canada there was abundance of this commodity to draw upon. Instead of flax being imported from Russia and Holland, Irish resources were utilized. Hemp was imported from the West Indies instead of from Russia, and so on. The unconquerable quality of British sea power not merely wrecked Napoleon's blockade but likewise put an end to his hopes of a march upon India. He was incapable of stopping Britain's world trade. Also he could do nothing to prevent smuggling on a vast scale. As a pamphlet printed in 1811 points out (no author's name is mentioned): ‘Without a strong navy it is as impossible to keep English vessels away from the continent as it is to invite birds to build their nests in our midst.’

While Napoleon was saying: ‘No trade with England or via England,’ the British were repeating: ‘No trade except by way of England.’ Relying on her navy, Britain could achieve her aim. Not so Napoleon. He hoped to get indispensable raw materials from overseas through neutral agents, but the British soon put a spoke in his wheel. In the end he was forced to grant French ships facilities to trade, under certain conditions, with the enemy. This signified that his system, in principle, had sprung a leak. ‘By taking this step,’ writes Sartorius von Waltershausen in his work *The Rise of World Economics*, ‘Napoleon admitted that his thesis of a self-supporting Europe was erroneous.’ The emperor of France and the inventor of the notion of the continental blockade was forced to order boots and uniforms, made out of British materials, from Hamburg. His soldiers marched to Moscow wearing uniforms made from cloth woven in England. Yet

their march on Moscow was intended to spell ruination to British trade and to stop the enormous leakage in the European blockade which brought about the crisis and the final collapse of the Franco-Russian alliance.

Was it, we may well ask, hypocrisy on the part of Alexander I when, in Tilsit days, he declared that he detested the English no less fiercely than did the emperor of France? No! Such hatred may have been genuine, for from times of old, Russian imperialism had collided with British imperialism in the Middle East and on the continent of Asia. Yet Russia, straddling both over Asia and Europe, could not follow through all circumstances the then strongest continental power. It was imperative at times to go so far as to take contrary measures and to become England's ally against Napoleon. Though neither party liked the alliance, they were constrained to it over and over again. This problem was discussed when we were dealing with tsar Paul's policies. In essence, what happened under Alexander was merely a repetition of the same story. Great Britain had recourse to her previous action and attacked Denmark. In the beginning of September 1807 Copenhagen was heavily bombarded and the Danish fleet captured. Thus England forestalled the closure of the Sound and procured an open passage to the Baltic coasts together with a trump card to play against the Russians. For their part, the Russians felt no enthusiasm for the continental blockade because, in spite of smuggling, they suffered from the stagnation of trade in the Baltic. This created renewed friction in relations between Napoleon and Alexander. They could not see eye to eye either as to the parcelling out of Turkey or upon other problems. As Windelband perspicaciously remarks: 'From the outset, their relationship suffered from the fact that neither of the two men felt any genuine friendliness towards one another. Napoleon could not rid himself of the idea that one day the tsar would inevitably turn into an enemy again. He disliked the notion that the tsar would become strong.' To put pressure upon the tsar, he incited the Turks against his nominal friend, well knowing that he could not rely on professions of amity. He was vividly aware that no trust could be placed in avowals of friendship. Still, he had to make sure of Russia at all costs. If he was unable to secure this by a stable alliance, then he must bring his desires about by war. Following the assassination of Paul, peace could have been negotiated. Now it was too late for such a move. A life or death struggle was the issue which confronted him.

'Either England goes down or my own empire is lost beyond recall.' No third alternative remained.



At first it appeared as if a stable alliance were possible and the march on India began. On February 2nd, 1808, Napoleon wrote to Alexander: 'Before an army of 50,000 men consisting of Russians, French, and perhaps a small number of Austrians, operating via Constantinople into Asia, would have reached the Euphrates, the English, shivering with fear, will have surrendered to the continent.' In those days, Napoleon spoke of the march on India as though it were the simplest thing in the world to accomplish: He was convinced that he would outstrip the feats of Alexander the Great. In March 1808 Alexander I, with a rather lavish display, offered his opposite number an army equipped for the Indian expedition. But the Russian people, as in the days of Paul when he talked of doing the same thing, searched their minds for an answer to the identical questions that had confronted them then. Alexander felt uneasy.

Rumour had it that Napoleon was assisting the Turks against the Russians, that there were flaws in the Franco-Russian alliance. Such tales did not suit the Corsican's book in the least for, owing to the Spanish revolt and the possibility of Austria taking up arms once more and at any moment, he did not feel his position to be too secure. It was, therefore, necessary to make an ostentatious display of the Franco-Russian alliance and to this end a meeting between the two potentates was arranged at Erfurt in the autumn of 1808. 'For those who lacked insight and did not know of what passed at the interview, this rencounter was successful. People were readily deluded, and believed in the unalterable solidity of the friendship and in Napoleon's personal predominance', writes the German historian Stählin in the third volume of his *History of Russia*, published in 1935.

Alexander gave what assistance he could to Napoleon on this occasion. Certain scenes, as in a theatre, were successfully staged and were highly appropriate to the place where the ceremony was performed. But things were quite otherwise when the two allies met in secret to talk matters over. Napoleon, as on so many other occasions, completely lost his temper and Alexander threatened to leave the room. The Corsican was asking too much and offering too little in exchange. On his way home,

Alexander confided to his sister while in Weimar: 'There is not room in Europe for both Napoleon and myself. Sooner or later one of us will have to throw up the sponge.' In another letter from Weimar, the tsar wrote: 'Bonaparte thinks I am a fool. But he laughs best who laughs last.' Nevertheless, a solemn warning was sent from Erfurt signed by the two monarchs conjuring the king of the United Kingdom to keep the peace 'in order to secure the happiness of Europe and her present generation whom under Providence we are destined to lead'. This was not the first warning of the kind, neither was this the first time that Great Britain preserved her inward calm in face of such a warning, for she well knew that the two angels of peace were weaving schemes of which these warnings were but part of the woof. Napoleon failed in getting the peace he wanted and was harried by wars till the end.

Nor could he any longer rely upon the Russian alliance at this juncture of affairs. Already he was pondering the possibility of waging war on Russia. When hostilities broke out between Russia and Austria and Napoleon in defiance of his commitments to the tsar sided with the Austro-Hungarian empire, Alexander retaliated by raising the ban on British goods. Thus the French emperor's most valuable weapon was knocked out of his hand and war became inevitable. In his war against England, two alternatives were left open to the strongest continental power, one of them being economic while the other was of a strategical nature. Napoleon had to choose between an unconditional alliance with Russia or war. A middle course was for any length of time impracticable. Napoleon, not being able to cross the small stretch of water which separated France from England, felt obliged to undertake his long march to Moscow. This was the unalterable command imposed upon him. He dared not flinch from the task lest he be constrained to abandon all his aims. Precisely because he found he could not take London he felt bound to take Moscow. This bears directly upon the naval battle of Trafalgar and the land war against Russia. Nelson's whip drove the Corsican into the vast plains of the tsarist empire where Napoleon's strategy proved inadequate and where he and his army met their tragical fate. Still he won battle after battle during the march on Moscow, the very heart of Russia, and once again the grandiose dream of invading India arose in his mind. He wrote upon this subject to one of his intimates: 'Alexander the Great attained the Ganges having started from a point less remote than

Moscow . . . Suppose you assume that Moscow is taken, Russia overthrown, the tsar either reconciled or slain in some kind of court conspiracy. Then tell me — is access to the Ganges so impossible for the French army and auxiliary troops? And is it sufficient for the Ganges to come in contact with the French sword to bring about the downfall of this structure of mercantile might? [England]

With this purpose in mind, as early as 1810 he was busily engaged in diplomatic negotiations with Turkey, Egypt, and Syria. Furnished with secret instructions from his emperor, the French consul Nercia had to pave the way in Syria and Egypt for parallel action from these countries for the attack on India. A French expeditionary force had once again to experience the same fate which had led to the disaster of Akka in 1799.



The disaster which befell the Grand Army in Russia put an end to all these plans and to many another besides. Moscow was in flames by the time Napoleon reached the city and the Russian Army still in being. It was impossible for him in this instance to purchase peace, let alone dictate it. The critical hour had struck. Now Prussia took up arms, and soon the whole of Europe rose in revolt against Napoleon's tyranny.

France had for some time past been only half-heartedly in the fight. Not so the oppressed peoples of Europe who entered into the struggle heart and soul. Those who bow before the great achievements of the French revolution which gave birth to the enfranchisement of human rights and liberties, and likewise created the mass-army, must painfully acknowledge that from the same source there has sprung the idea of total war. Yet though the achievements of the French revolution as manipulated by Napoleon turned into a curse, now they should become a blessing again. Indubitably the blessings bestowed by the French revolution became accursed under Napoleon. It was from the nationalism of resurgent France that Napoleon drew his reserves of titanic strength. By leading the French nation into war against the peoples of Europe, he kindled the flame of the latter's nationalism as well. In December 1811, his brother Jerome wrote to him rather ominously: 'We should fear the despair of the people who have nothing more to lose.' As was the case with nationalism so was it likewise with the mass-armies. These enabled

Napoleon to win victory upon victory. But when he used them to violate human rights, he called into being the same sort of mass-armies among the conquered. Before the Wars of Liberation had started, an intelligent Frenchman wrote forebodingly: 'French armies have hitherto beaten the Germans because they were stronger. But once the German spirit is aroused the Germans will beat the French. I consider that there are already signs of such a development. Providence works in peculiar ways.' The system of requisitioning which developed brutal though partially state-organized looting became a curse rather than a blessing to Napoleon. At the outset it considerably increased the Corsican's military power. But he could not for ever continue to say to his soldiers: 'You need uniforms, you are hungry. I shall lead you into the richest regions of the world.' He could not do this without challenging the despoiled peoples and rendering his military task so onerous that it became impossible of achievement. In the final act of the drama, the emperor suffered huge losses because he was unable to concentrate his forces on one single and decisive objective. This upset all his strategic principles. Similarly the idea of mass-armies turned against him. 'In the last analysis it was not a war waged by France against England, but the personal fight of Napoleon against the sole bulwark which stood in opposition to his lust for power and the manifestation of his unwonted political genius', writes Meurer. And because this fact could not in the long run be concealed from Napoleon's soldiers, they failed to see that the war was their affair at all as they had in the past. For many years the problem of desertion had become increasingly acute. Delbrück goes so far as to say that Napoleon lost his campaigns of 1812-13 mainly through desertions. Owing to this state of things, his armies were so reduced when they reached Moscow that the campaign had to be called off. Taken as a whole and in retrospect we see that the achievements of the French revolution which had made Napoleon's victories possible brought about in Europe as well as in France the conditions which led to his loss of power and final collapse.

At St. Helena, Napoleon said that the feeling of independence among the peoples of Europe was so strong that it would have been impossible to mould the whole continent to the shape of one single pattern. He had never grasped the fact that the French revolution was merely the expression of a growing feeling of independence in the hearts of individuals as

well as of nations. True, France was the first to give expression to these feelings, but in other parts of Europe, under pressure of historic events, the same kind of upheaval was inevitable. The process was considerably hastened by the French revolution, the revolutionary wars, and above all by Napoleon's political conquests and his oppression of the peoples of Europe. His policy was, in the final resort, shown to be absurd.

The moment would have come in any case, but the sufferings the peoples of Europe were made to endure might have lasted a great deal longer had Napoleon been compelled to fight Great Britain. One day or another, he was doomed to encounter as insurmountable an obstacle on the continent as he had in his contest with England. British superiority at sea compelled him to adopt, in regard to the continental peoples, despotic measures even greater than his natural egoism and national principles dictated. In the first place, France and his lust for personal power would have propelled him on his way. But the collapse of his empire came sooner than it might have done. All these events would have been speeded up had the nations of Europe developed strongly national characteristics earlier. They had the advantage of superior numbers and their economic needs were as closely interwoven with the world system then prevalent as they are to-day. In 1800, 75 per cent of Germany's trade and agriculture was upheld by hand-spun and hand-woven textiles. This was the situation almost everywhere. Yet one of the most vital causes of the collapse of Napoleon's plans for world conquest was the loss of all connections with overseas trade.

Winkelman advises us to look back along the avenues of history and, bearing Napoleon's fate in mind, we shall see a close similarity in what befell his predecessors in their endeavours to attain world dominion. Spain went down because in her struggle with England she was unable to retain supremacy at sea. The same cause accounted for Louis XIV's failure and for Napoleon's final undoing. 'World history shows a straight line leading to Trafalgar', writes Winkelman. He goes on to say: 'In each case, the failure of the attempts to achieve hegemony was due to loss of sea power and the severing of overseas communications. The continent of Europe proved to be too exiguous a territory to serve as a base for genuine supremacy.' Friedrich Ratzel once wrote: 'The sea alone is capable of creating a world power.' The history of state systems confirms the accuracy of this affirmation. A country can retain its hold of a com-

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manding height only so long as it is backed by the sea and does not forfeit this vantage point.

The only opponent Napoleon was unable to defeat was British sea power and it is symbolical of the whole war that a British warship took Napoleon to his final place of captivity. His victories no less than his defeat were due to historical conditions and forces to which the great are subject whether the greatness is genuine or spurious. There can be no doubt that in his way Napoleon was a great man.

## CHAPTER II

### KÖNIGGRÄTZ, SEDAN, AND THE FUTURE WAR

GNEISENAU wrote to Wellington: 'Great Britain is under more obligations to that scoundrel Napoleon than to any other mortal man. By the events which he brought into being, he increased England's greatness, her prosperity, and her wealth. Henceforth, England will be unrestricted mistress of the sea and will have nothing to fear either in the realm of sea supremacy or in the field of international trade competition.'

No words could have been truer. Napoleon's attempt to rule the sea by means of his land forces, however, proved a costly enterprise to the continent as a whole. Devastated and impoverished as it was and indebted to Great Britain, it needed a long time to recover. In addition to this disastrous state of things, the crops of 1817-18 were a failure. In German territory famine raged with special fury. This caused mass-emigrations to take place on an unprecedented scale. During the panic, children and old or infirm persons perished while trying to flee. The mortality rate in the ports and on board the emigrant vessels was tremendously high. The standard of life fell rapidly. In 1830, Prussia had not yet returned to the standard of 1805. In what was subsequently to become the German Empire the population increased between 1816-30 from about twenty-five million to about thirty million. It became habitual in those days to talk of 'a surplus population' and, to escape the catastrophe this threatened, the contraction of marriages was rendered more difficult. To-day in the same area there are three times as many people with a far higher standard of living. This progress has been rendered possible through industrialism and world commerce.

The transition to industrialism and capitalism was a vital necessity. But from this necessity there issued another need: the unification of Germany on a national basis. Public opinion, roused by the ideas of the French revolution, the revolutionary wars, and the Wars of Liberation, pressed the legislators forward in this direction.

Unification, however, met with innumerable obstacles. Within the Germanic Confederation, which had been founded during the Wars of

Liberation, Prussia and Austria struggled for hegemony — a struggle which waxed ever more furious. Like their more powerful brethren, the lesser princes wished to retain their personal prerogatives and even to expand them. The peoples of Germany were at this date scattered among countless states and territories, each with its separate legal system, regulations, industrial legislation, weights and measures, coinage, etc. These territories had, in addition, their own customs' barriers, just like those which exist to-day between one nation and another. Each tiny state endeavoured to be self-supporting. Thus, means of communication and methods of production lagged very far behind the times, and it was impossible to compete in any way with Great Britain and France. Customs barriers were obstacles to German economic development.

Ships were unable to take a straight course but had to cross the rivers from one bank to the other and were held up at one customs-house after the other. The members of every community and each individual had to contend with these numerous restrictions and so great was the ensuing mental and material strain that it became in due time unbearable. It goes without saying that not everyone nor every class of society suffered exactly to the same extent. But no matter what the pressure might be, it could find no relief until a united nation had come into existence, a united Germany which would be in a position to cope with the new needs. Wars waged for the sake of unification were the result. Prussia fought Denmark in 1864; Austria in 1866; France in 1870-71, and the victories of Königgrätz and Sedan were of great significance from the political and military point of view.

During this phase of development, ideas of national unity and social progress went hand in hand. The liberals of the left and the socialists did not gather round Marx and Engels fortuitously. These two men were the most persistent champions of a Greater Germany. During the revolution of 1848-49 they tried to smash the Austrian realm because in their opinion it did not possess sufficient vitality to continue in existence. From this composite state they wished to detach the Germanic elements so as to form a German republic. Knowing that the time was not ripe for such a fundamental change, and alarmed at the possible consequences of so all-embracing a revolution, the more moderate liberals attempted to create a 'Little Germany' excluding Austria and placing Prussia at the helm. As a result of the revolutionary situation a National Assembly was

elected, but the advocates of the solution were too few in number to carry their policy through and the Prussian king, Frederick William IV, could not be persuaded to accept the imperial crown. As a true blue-blooded Prussian, he felt no interest in the effort to establish national unity, especially since he knew very well that the movement had been born out of liberal and revolutionary ideas. Only a few years before the first German Reich was called into being, the Prussian landed aristocracy put up a passionate resistance to what they called the 'renunciation of our Prussian fatherland', and they struggled obstinately against the 'swindle about nationality'. Their efforts were of no avail, for those whom they had formerly branded as 'enemies of the people', 'toadies of the French', and 'revolutionary demagogues' were increasingly looked upon as indispensable to the German people.

Bismarck owed much of his greatness to the fact that he realized this. He was the exponent of the economic ambitions of the middle class while maintaining the position of power for Prussia and her ruling caste. Bismarck was fully aware that unless war were waged on Austria, Prussia would gradually sink to become a second-class power. Also he was afraid lest the German problem be solved with the help of the liberals (whom he deemed both 'odious' and 'terrible') if the feudal ruling class continued to resist innovation and refused to accept the irrevocable development of Germany into a united national state with Prussian Junkerdom at the head of government.

With this destiny before her eyes, Prussia roused herself to action. Visible expression was given to her power of self-assertion both in foreign and home affairs by the introduction of the most thoroughgoing army reforms, reforms the like of which she had never experienced before and was not to experience again until the outbreak of the 1914-18 war. The Prussian general and field-marshal Baron von Manteufel, who in the years 1850-67 was at the head of the War Department, thought fit in the course of these reforms to remove from the Officers' Corps a number of inefficient men of aristocratic birth. Later, he looked upon this as his most important political achievement for, in his estimation, had he not made this drastic clearance, the victorious issue of the wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870 would have been impossible. In the early fifties of the nineteenth century, the Officers' Corps had become even more inefficient than it had been in 1806.

Soon after the Wars of Liberation ended, Prussian Junkerdom endeavoured to compensate itself for the defeat it had sustained during the period of reforms and to recapture its erstwhile prerogatives. The struggle for national and social hegemony was fought out at first in the army. In 1818 the aristocrats in the Officers' Corps were but a bare majority. The militia, which was a liberal institution, was almost exclusively commanded by middle-class officers. Thus the aristocracy felt themselves peculiarly menaced and they fought energetically, insisting that only those elements 'suitable to the rank of officer' should be admitted. These ambitious pretensions served only to lower the quality of the officers and in the end Manteufel had to take selective action. He did not carry on the work in the tradition of Scharnhorst — who had met his death during the Wars of Liberation. Indeed, during these years Scharnhorst's principles were set aside. His colleagues, Boyen, Clausewitz, and others, considered that the development of the militia was the best way to introduce universal military service. But now, as violent opposition to the middle class grew, the militia was to be reformed out of existence. Roon, the Minister of War, frankly admitted that the innate evil of the militia was that 'one was not master in one's own house'. Prussia was faced not only by a foreign enemy but by one at home as well. The alien foe was Austria; the one on the home front was the progressively-minded middle class. In order to breed an army which would prove reliable in face of the foreign as well as the internal foe, the government, in defiance of the rights of the Diet, substituted a three-year term for the two-year term of military service. Thus in the great military conflicts of the epoch there is mirrored 'the struggle of two social classes for hegemony. On the one hand there was the landed aristocracy, while on the other was the aspiring middle class', writes the Germany historian Professor Ziekursch.



Nowadays a lengthy period of training is needed if a man is to master the complicated technique of war, and no country can with impunity ignore this fact. But in those times the three years of compulsory military service was used as a weapon of internal policy by the aristocracy against the middle class. Bismarck, in a letter to Field-Marshal von Moltke, shows that the Iron Chancellor fully realized this fact. Moltke, commenting on a recently introduced reform in the Russian army,

wrote: 'Whether this provision is intended as a foil to the foreign or the home enemy must be left to conjecture.' To which Bismarck replied: 'Not against the home enemy, for it is connected with the shortening of the term of military service.'

During the period of unification, feudalist Prussia fought strenuously against the encroachments of liberalism while at the same time she profited by middle-class achievements when these served to strengthen the military arm. As has frequently been said, Prussia owed her victory over Austria to compulsory military service as much as to the intellectual liberty, flexibility, and independence developed by the Protestants since the days of the Enlightenment. Catholic Austria lagged behind the times in this respect as in so many others. Her industrial and economic growth had been far slower than that of Prussia where, since 1850 and in spite of much resistance, great progress had been made. Thus railways and telegraphic communications were at the disposal of the Prussian high command. Again, Prussia had introduced a more up-to-date rifle which was handled by better trained soldiers. Perhaps the greatness of Helmut von Moltke lies in his admirable and sympathetic knowledge of how best to utilize the technical discoveries of his day — an art which his successors in Imperial Germany lacked.

As early as 1855, Bismarck displayed definite optimism in regard to a war on Austria. He said at that time: 'One blow — a major battle — and Prussia will be in a position to dictate peace terms.' Later he admitted quite frankly: 'To best the Austrians was no fine art. I knew that they were not properly equipped and that I could rely upon the Prussian army.' In addition, during the 1866 campaign Austria was at war with Italy, and in this undertaking she proved successful.

Victorious Prussia annexed Hanover, Hesse-Kassel, Nassau, and Frankfurt, while compelling Austria to leave the southern German territories to their fate, which meant, of course, to Prussia. Thus the German Confederation came to an end. It was replaced by the North German Confederation under the leadership of Prussia. Several lesser states joined the new amalgamation. In this way, at least so far as the northern part of Germany was concerned, a unity was achieved which all other nations with the exception of Italy had long since brought about.

Between 1850 and 1870 Germany took the first decisive steps towards modern industrialism. At a rough estimate, her exports of woollen goods increased threefold. Technical inventions in the realms of transport and manufacture wrought more and more in favour of specialization in the world of economics. Germany had no choice but to follow this development or perish. The ghastly effects of the famine years 1817-18 were repeated in 1846-47. Starving people were to be met with on the streets, in the forests, and in huts. Many had no other food than what they could pick up in the wilds and they lived like savages. So exhausted did the mass of the people become that work was brought to a standstill. The wretchedness was such that entire communities put all their goods and chattels up for sale hoping to get to America on the proceeds; 40 per cent of Berlin's budget had to be earmarked for the relief of the destitute. Industrialization alone vanquished the prevalent misery, industrialization which had been so strongly opposed by the old ruling classes. It likewise fostered Moltke's ingenious strategy of annihilation. This strategy, like the concept of warfare promulgated by Clausewitz, who had died in 1831, had close affiliations with Napoleonic strategy. But technical advances had already brought the use of this strategy to higher levels of achievement. Napoleon together with Clausewitz and Moltke considered that the annihilation of an enemy army by offensive action on the part of the strongest forces was the only path to victory and spelled the true significance of war. For each of these men the fight put up by mass-armies against hostile military forces was decisive in warfare. In their opinion there could be no other way of obtaining a victorious outcome of hostilities. Yet behind Moltke's idea of the annihilation of the enemy lurked the idea that, for economic reasons, a war should be short and be decided quickly because the war economy engendered by the new age could not bear the strain of great and profound shocks.

Should a war be prolonged, would the annihilation of the hostile armed forces prove decisive? Might not economic and social factors enforce a decision before the army had been defeated? Or would the enemy, for one reason or the other, be placed in an unfavourable position and yet be conquered by the strategy of exhaustion? At the time, such questions were not asked. But Helmuth von Moltke started the strategical school which derived the need for a swift decision from the general laws governing modern capitalist production on world trade with all the consequences.

entailed in regard to the very existence of the country. 'The method by which modern wars have to be waged is that of a speedy and decisive outcome,' wrote Moltke in 1869 in his special instructions to higher officers. 'The number of troops, the difficulty of feeding them, the cost of an armed situation, the interruption to trade and commerce, traffic and agriculture, the organization of the armies and their assemblage — all these things make it a matter of urgent necessity to terminate a war as quickly as possible.'

It is obvious that this doctrine was the military and strategical expression of the enormous economic development of Germany since 1850. This development in the economic sphere provided the strategist with the means for putting his theories of swift decision in warfare into practice. For the rapid economic development of Germany had, among other things, created the network of railways, the telegraph, modern weapons, the educated civilian and the up-to-date workman. Thus the High Command had at its disposal qualified men with the help of whom it expected to make a short war and gain a speedy victory. No one but Moltke foresaw that the campaign of 1870-71 would be won by means of the telegraph. At the present moment, economic and technical factors play an even greater role in the strategy and tactics of the High Command, though this role may be a conscious or unconscious one. Also the social factors have become more and more obvious in an age of mass-armies and great social movements. During the war of 1870-71 there was a veritable revolutionary situation in France which ended in the establishment of the Commune. In Germany at that date, as in 1866, such social factors and tendencies were still in the background because the solution of the problem of national unification was predominant. This problem was only solved at the end of the war. Many Germans harboured quite different ideas as to the solution, but they cherished the hope that their dreams might find realization in a democratic Germany. Their dreams did in the end come true. After 1866 Germany entered a new epoch which Bismarck was well aware of, so that he met the economic and legislative demands made by the democrats in a generous spirit. His contemporaries began to ask themselves whether he still represented the interests of the landed gentry. As in 1806 these landed gentry made a stand against Bismarck on the ground that his policy paved the way to industrial development and thereby to the ascent of the middle class. But there was no alternative

to Bismarck's course of action. The process of defeudalizing the Officers' Corps, which had been going forward with a swing between 1860 and 1870, could not now be stopped.

In the War Cabinet and the War Ministry there had been acrimonious discussion on the point as to whether such a purge might not endanger the chivalric traditions with which the Old Prussian Officers' Corps was imbued. On the eve of the outbreak of the war of 1870, William I, in his capacity as king of Prussia, earnestly warned his generals to be careful in their selection of officers. Demeter remarks in this connection: 'Naturally enough such well-meant admonitions were fruitless. The demand for officers far outstripped the "good" Old Prussian supply.'



Since the publication in 1930 of the German Imperial Archives concerning the armament policies of Imperial Germany, we have learned that the three army corps which were considered by many in 1914 to be sufficiently strong to deal with France quickly failed because, for fear of democratization, officers 'who were not suitable for commissioned rank' were not chosen to lead the troops. In comparison with what they grew to be later on, the armies of 1866 and 1870-71 were relatively small and thus the officer problem could at that time in some measure be solved in accordance with the feudal ambitions of the upper classes in Prussia.

It is conceivable that the German army which fought during 1870-71 might have been of better quality. But on the whole it served its purpose well. In comparison with the army which Napoleon III put into the field, the German army was a marvel. The nephew of Napoleon I did not bear comparison with the great Corsican on whose fame he consciously lived. True, he endeavoured to be as like his uncle as possible and was sincere in his feeling of responsibility in carrying on the Napoleonic tradition.

Carried to power on a wave of reaction in mid-nineteenth century Europe, Napoleon III regaled civilization with the spectacle of crushing out liberty and murdering democracy by means of the plebiscite which had emerged from the democratic demands of mankind. The powerful military commanders of the day were by no means the *élite* of France, for they had often been selected merely because they might prove useful in maintaining the authority of Napoleon III. For political reasons, too, the emperor had had to abandon the principle of universal military

service. In Germany at the time, universal military service could not be put to full use. Nevertheless her army was, numerically speaking, far superior to the French. Bismarck and his generals were kept accurately informed as to the catastrophic conditions in the French army, for the military attaché Graf von Waldersee in Paris had never ceased to send in his reports on the situation. These documents were subsequently published.

Military conditions under Napoleon III were all the more fatal to the well-being of France inasmuch as the whole historical origin of his empire was not based on peace. Proudhon, the French publicist, wrote in 1851 (immediately after the *coup d'état*): 'The Bonapartist party seems to think it can satisfy proletarian demands by wars and deceit.' This feeling among the industrial proletariat was all the stronger since the freedom of organization which they had enjoyed was so rigorously suppressed during the third Napoleon's régime. Napoleon III never succeeded in persuading the modern workers, at least those among them who were conscious of their status, that he was a 'social emperor' as he would fain have had them believe. The workers very naturally measured their freedom by the amount granted to their own organizations. To divert men's minds from home difficulties by turning their thoughts to foreign affairs is an unwholesome state for a nation and usually marks the beginning of collapse. In the course of his reign, Napoleon paralysed the creative powers of his people. The finer Frenchmen were forced into opposition which, even in the earlier stages of the war, was to prove fatal in the then extant technique of warfare and the lack of adequately organized methods for mass-suppression.



Prussia's speedy and decisive victory over Austria in 1866 cast a shadow over all Napoleon III's warlike undertakings. It threatened his prestige and weakened the position of France in Europe. At the same time, it strengthened the position of Prussia and that of a Germany-in-the-making under the leadership of Prussia. Although Napoleon III pretended to be an upholder of the nationalistic principle, he demanded after Prussia's victory over Austria the transfer of German territories to France. One of his representatives declared that 'without genuine compensations both the throne and the dynasty would be jeopardized'. Such motives in domestic politics played their part during the régime of Napoleon III, all

the more so that revolution was already on the way. It is possible, too, that Napoleon III also feared lest the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership might menace the security of France.

Unlike Napoleon III, Bismarck had at this historic hour the whole population behind him. The Chancellor's situation was far more favourable than in 1866, and for the first time since 1813 every man was eager to join the army and was ready to fight. Even Karl Marx declared that, so far as Germany was concerned, the war of 1870 was a defensive war. But he was careful to point out that a distinction must be drawn between the French people as a whole and the Napoleonic regime. For the sake of the future of both peoples, the rights of the French nation should not be encroached upon.

Napoleon hesitated because he was only too well aware of his various weaknesses. Out of eighty-seven departments only sixteen of the prefects were in a position to report wholehearted enthusiasm for the war. The empress Eugénie maintained that war alone could save the empire from revolution. And hardly had the war started than the French suffered defeat and close on the heels of defeat came the revolution. After Moltke's decisive victory at Sedan, the emperor wrote to his wife on September 2nd, 1870: 'We have undertaken something which is opposed to every principle and to reason. Catastrophe was foreordained. It is a crushing blow.' As the emperor was being led into captivity, the French soldiers who met him on the way threatened him with clenched fists.

Whereas Germany, at the beginning of August, mustered 500,000 men on the frontiers of the land where universal military service had taken birth, France could raise merely 300,000 men. In addition, Germany possessed more modern and a numerically superior quantity of artillery. Moltke's army constituted a sharp and offensive weapon. Nothing could impede its triumphant progress. For a second time since the Wars of Liberation, German soldiers pushed on into the very heart of the French nation.

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Not only was Germany's domestic and military situation very favourable at that time, but her position in foreign affairs was no less to her advantage. The great powers, and especially Great Britain, looked upon Napoleon III as the breaker of the peace and wished him to suffer a more or less big defeat. Germany at that time was on excellent terms with

Russia, who not only remained neutral but threatened Austria with war if the latter profited by the occasion to compensate herself for the defeat she had sustained in 1866. Besides, Austria stood in Russia's path to the Balkans, and for this reason the tsarist empire was the more willing to side with Germany which at that time had no major interests in the Balkans. Unopposed by Bismarck, Russia consolidated her position on the Black Sea while the Franco-Prussian war was in full swing. Then, step by step, she meant to secure the Dardanelles.

After the victory at Sedan, it became more and more evident that certain forces were at work to change what had started as a national war into a war of conquest and that Alsace-Lorraine would be annexed to Germany. The alleged reason for the annexation was that it would help to keep the peace between nations. Marx, together with other German critics of his day, prophesied: 'If Alsace and Lorraine are annexed, then France and Russia will wage war on Germany. There is no need to emphasize the disastrous consequences that will ensue.' Marx saw in the annexation a means of 'changing this war into a European institution and thus to ruin both Germany and France by mutual destruction'.

Just as in earlier days Great Britain had drawn a distinction between Napoleon I and the French people, so Bismarck started the war of 1870-71 with the popular slogan: 'We are waging war on Napoleon III and not on the French nation.' When Meurer remarks that France received from England 'such lenient peace terms that the French could hardly regard themselves as a defeated nation', this only goes to prove that after the fall of Napoleon I, Great Britain really did draw the distinction. But after the fall of Napoleon III no such distinction was made. On the contrary, the budding republic had to suffer for the sins of the second empire. Many German Social Democrats who, at the outset, had given their support to Bismarck's policy, were now sent to gaol as traitors because they opposed the annexation of French provinces and wished the original slogan to be substantiated. The nation was united until the victory at Sedan. But afterwards many flaws in this unity were to be observed. So far, Germany had enjoyed the sympathetic approval of the whole world. Now it was the reverse. In certain ways Bismarck was aware of the jeopardy into which his country was falling because of this universal change of attitude. He was tempted to negotiate as clever a peace as the one he had made with Austria. But he failed in carrying out his design, for the leading

commanders desired to utilize the great hour of achievement to the full and demanded an even stupider unconditional surrender than that which had been claimed at Frankfurt.

The *élite* of the French nation did not lament Napoleon's fall. They felt relief at his overthrow. But the nation should be allowed to live and that which belonged to France should remain French. So the people rallied its democratic martial virtues. The heroic resistance of the improvised republican armies under the leadership of Gambetta was more difficult to deal with than the armies of the second empire — at least the Germans found them so.



About this time a London newspaper, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, published some rather strange prophecies. The articles in question constituted a survey of the military, strategical, and political problems arising out of the recent Franco-Prussian war. They were greatly appreciated all over the world. The author was Engels, the ideological leader of the German Social Democrats. He had always been profoundly interested in military problems, and in this series of articles dealt so astutely, impartially, and informatively about questions of strategy that even the Prussian General Staff was duly impressed. Major Wachs, who for years had been looked upon by the left wing press as the supreme authority on matters of strategy, referred to the writer as 'my friend Friedrich Engels', and was on the most amicable terms with this socialist who at the time was living in London. Such a friendship was a somewhat extraordinary phenomenon in a member of the German General Staff. But though the two men differed so widely in political outlook their common interest in military science drew them together. Friedrich Engels never opposed the generals or the defence of the Fatherland. But he fought tooth and nail against militarism being used as a method of dealing with home and foreign affairs. This is the conclusion we are led to after a perusal of the above-mentioned articles which appeared in September 1870.

In these articles Engels raised the question: How are the Prussians to be beaten? He answered prophetically in his introductory remarks: 'At the outset of the war, Germany merely wished to defend herself against French jingoism. As the war progressed, however, this attitude slowly but surely changed into one of newly awakened German chauvinism. This

is worthy of closer examination.' He proceeds to describe the military organization of Prussia, for which he had a high appreciation and especially for the military genius of Moltke. While dwelling upon the reasons for Prussian superiority in this matter, he goes on to say: 'Should an equally intelligent, brave, and civilized nation carry out in practice what Prussia merely has on paper, namely, to transform every able-bodied citizen into a soldier, and should this nation limit the time of service to what is strictly necessary for the purpose in view, should that nation likewise utilize such an organization during times of war with as much efficiency as Prussia, then that nation would enjoy the same advantages over a Prussianized Germany as the latter at the moment exercises over France.'

'And,' further prophesied Engels, 'should France ever become dismembered, we may rest assured that she will adopt these principles. France would then transform herself into a nation of soldiers. In a few years, France would surprise Prussia much as Prussia astonished the world this summer.' Cannot Prussia do the same? Undoubtedly. But Prussia would have to cease being the kind of state we know it to be to-day and would have to jettison its ideas of conquest. It might thereby imperil its present home policy. Engels thought it would then become a democratic country and only a democracy can be a nation-in-arms. Soon, as we shall see, France was to amaze the Prussians, and that very quickly. As a matter of fact, Germany was destined to lag behind her western neighbours and this on purely unpolitical grounds. This fact largely accounted for the failure of Schlieffen's offensive plan to take effect in 1914.



Gambetta's improvised armies laid the foundation-stone for the advent of the period of a people-in-arms which was characteristic of France from 1870-71 down to 1914. The sins committed during the regime of the second empire could not be atoned for in a few weeks or even in years. But though the weapons and technique of warfare at that epoch were not developed to the full, improvised armies could no longer be counted upon to be of value. Nevertheless, advances had gone so far that, given similar circumstances, an improvised army might be relied upon to fulfil its duty and secure victory on the battlefield. Such a situation no longer existed in the France of 1940. Hence, no Gambetta arose to make up for past

years of negligence by bold improvisations while carrying on the war. In 1870, the Bonapartist General Trochu was willing, for the sake of home security, to capitulate rather than sacrifice his national army. This form of surrender has often been resorted to in the age of mass-armies and mass-movements. During the siege of Paris, he carefully refrained from any military measures which might have stimulated the people to impulsive action. The people, for their part, were willing to risk everything because the war had changed into one of defence on behalf of the young republic and was considered the nation's affair. Trochu invariably referred to 'demagoguery of Paris', whereupon Gambetta would retort with striking aptness: 'You have merely given utterance to your own condemnation.' Paris was cut off on all sides, but Gambetta succeeded in escaping from the besieged city in a balloon. He set up his government at Tours. After one hundred and thirty-two days of heroic resistance, Paris, mainly through starvation, was forced to capitulate. During the war of 1914-18 Germany was doomed to experience much the same sort of siege in her home fortress, only on a more gigantic scale.

In 1938, the Frigate Commander Heye of the German navy wrote: 'The war of 1870 was the last purely continental war waged by Germany. Forty-four years later, we were given a demonstration of how dependent Germany had become on the general sea and maritime situation, for the 1914-18 war brought victory to the enemy because he was able to bottle up vital sea communications.'

The decisive factor in the wars for German unification was that these contests were duels between continental land powers whose movements were restricted to certain circumscribed areas. Each of these wars had a relatively small goal to capture and the British principle of the balance of power was not in any way threatened. From Britain's point of view, such disturbances were purely domestic affairs of continental Europe, although it was noted that the Germans had penetrated into the heart of France and showed definitely aggressive ambitions. But Great Britain was more sympathetically concerned with the fate of the young republic than she was animated with fear of the growing strength of the new continental power of Germany.



Even less than in the days of Clausewitz did Germany in that epoch

consider the possibility of war with Great Britain. German ambitions on the continent were very limited in scope, and as to the world at large, she had no ambitions whatsoever. Consequently there were no serious clashes with Great Britain. Nor did Germany feel inferior in any way to British power. It was universally held in Germany that Napoleon had been overthrown by continental land armies while British sea power had played only a secondary part. For these reasons, Clausewitz' theories of warfare proved inadequate. Napoleon's strategy, from which Clausewitz derived his doctrines and from which later on both Moltke and Schlieffen derived theirs, was not the kind of strategy wherewith to conquer British sea power. It was an essentially continental strategy and this sufficed Germany at that time. From the point of view of military science, the deeper causes of Napoleon's defeat were intrinsically worthless so long as Germany confined her activities to continental objectives. Clausewitz' dictum that 'the annihilation of the enemy forces must take its place among objectives of major importance' held good and for a certain period was correct. 'This concept', wrote Schlieffen in 1905, 'led us to Königgrätz and to Sedan. It is based on the experience of the great militaristic period of the early nineteenth century.'

Schlieffen was right, but only conditionally. For the whole idea was founded on the experience gained during the land wars of the epoch, and not on the far more important experience which Napoleon with his continental strategy had been forced to learn when he took action against British sea power. The wars waged for the unification of Germany had failed to draw the strategist's attention to this fact, for naval superiority played but an insignificant part in the struggles. These wars were relatively short ones, but not for this reason, for sea wars are usually of long duration. Nevertheless, the Franco-German enterprise lasted for ten months from the declaration of war until the ratification of the peace. The protraction of the conflict did not matter very much because it consumed little compared with the wars of later days. The economic condition of Germany was not conspicuously interfered with in spite of some tentative efforts made by the French navy to intercept vessels going to enemy shores. This was because British sea power had not intervened on one side or the other. Thus though Paris had to capitulate, it was through hunger and not through annihilation. Still, Clausewitz' tenet held, for German unification was established in consequence of putting

the French army out of commission in the field and thus in an indirect manner 'annihilating the enemy'.



The war of the future, like a sphinx, did not disclose its secrets on the battlefields of Bohemia and France but on the other side of the Atlantic during the War of Secession in 1861-65. The name of this civil strife in the United States derives from the fact that the agricultural South wished to secede from the industrial North and thus win its independence.

The war historians Emil Daniels and Otto Haintz in their completion of Delbrück's work *The History of Warfare* write: 'On the whole, European strategists are little concerned with the practical outcome and significance of the War of Secession. When, in 1914, the Germans and their enemies went into battle, both sides had but scant knowledge of the fact that half a century earlier in the dense forests of the New World there had come into existence a totally new concept of warfare, the exploitation of which might have proved of incalculable value to either of the belligerents.'

The War of Secession lasted about as long as the first World War, and in both cases a short campaign had been contemplated. Also, in both cases, the final victors had at first to endure unbelievable misfortunes at the outset. In the beginning, the American armies were composed of a militia because there was no standing army. A parallel is easy to draw. Just as during the War of Secession the fighting men became increasingly of the militia type and had to learn their craft while the struggle was raging, so, too, did the armies of the 1914-18 war have to tread in their predecessors' footsteps. Static, that is to say trench, warfare was likewise the order of the day during the War of Secession. The comparison made by the above-mentioned historians is by no means the only one to be drawn from the War of Secession and the last World War, for the American War of Secession revealed the method to be adopted in the later war. This was of far greater importance and was an essential trait of the 1914-18 war. It demonstrated the triumphant use of sea power and the blockade which depended on naval supremacy.

Meurer remarks: 'It is characteristic of sea power that it works by methods far less evident than land power and that its effects are far less obvious.' This remark leads us to the belief that even to-day the impor-

tance of maritime supremacy is not yet fully realized in the concept of warfare nor is it adequately appreciated. One would think that at least the British were fully aware of the significance of maritime supremacy in peace and war. Curiously enough this is not the case. Mahan, the outstanding expert on naval history, drew the attention of the British to this fact in his epoch-making work *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. The book was published in 1889. Mahan, in his preface, states that the influence of sea power on the course of history is not even appreciated by the British themselves, yet English writers ought to be the first to recognize the facts seeing that their nation owes its greatness more than anything else to its dominance of the seaways. Mahan cited two English historians who deal with Hannibal's contest with Rome and with Napoleon's with Great Britain. They deduced a series of parallels which could be drawn from these wars. With the utmost astonishment Mahan discovered that neither of these two Englishmen had stressed an obvious similarity, namely that in both cases the victors were rulers of the waves. Yet Mahan saw in this the outstanding factor of success and among naval historians of to-day this is now recognized, in spite of the many criticisms that have been hurled at Mahan's head. What Clausewitz did for the development of land warfare, Mahan has done for sea warfare. There has been talk of two schools of strategy, the one of Clausewitz which is termed 'militarism', and the other represented by Mahan and which is called 'navalism'. The former school thinks in terms of continental warfare, the latter in terms of the world as a whole. The element of one is land; the other's element is the water which connects nations and continents. The importance of the navalistic school of thought is that, with the growth of maritime supremacy, world trade has shown similar development.

The War of Secession in America may have started Mahan off on his studies regarding the function of sea power in relation to the great wars of mankind. Be this as it may, Mahan was of opinion that never before in the annals of history had sea power played so important a part as it did in the American civil war. Meurer, too, stresses this idea and further declares that the War of Secession almost rivals the Great War. Nevertheless, continues Meurer, 'this civil war is coming erroneously to be regarded as a mere territorial war waged by large armies of militia'. Even Moltke declared that the War of Secession was never a large-scale under-

## THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

taking. In actual fact it was a gigantic undertaking, a combination of land and sea warfare, in which the indirect weapon of maritime supremacy, or as we should say nowadays, economic warfare, and the consequent blockade were decisive. Though such deductions run counter to Clausewitz's theories, we have to remember that in his day no major naval engagement took place, so that his theories were based on too narrow a field of inquiry. The North American naval forces endeavoured throughout to bring their southern brethren to book by inaugurating the blockade, and this spelled the latter's defeat. Meurer rightly remarks that Clausewitz based his theories on a one-sided aspect of warfare, for war has always two faces, namely a military one and an economic one. Napoleon, Clausewitz, and Moltke all had been disciples of the doctrine of the strategy of annihilation, whereas the Northern States of America used the strategy of attrition on their opponents. The Southern States depended for their prosperity on their export of agricultural produce, which mainly consisted of cotton, sugar, and tobacco, both to their northern opponents and to European markets. Moreover, they had to import many essential commodities. It was on this twofold economic dependence that the northerners built up their strategy. Industrial development lagged far behind the times in the South. The manufactured goods it consumed had to be imported either from the North or from Europe. These were, in the main, rails and rolling-stock, cloth and leather wares, and even salt — for there was none of this commodity to be found in the South. Smuggling on the grand scale persisted after the outbreak of the war. But the government of the North found that it had to close its eyes to frequent breaches in the blockade because the North itself was in urgent need of cotton. This resembled the system of licences introduced by Napoleon which was contrary to the whole idea of a thoroughgoing continental blockade. Nevertheless, the blockade imposed on the South by the North proved both disadvantageous to the former and effective. The Union possessed a goodly number of merchantmen, and since naval vessels were still constructed out of wood, the merchant fleet served as efficient men-of-war to impose the blockade. During the War of Secession wood gave place to iron in the construction of naval vessels. This is another item which renders that war so important an event. In the industrial North there were excellent shipbuilding yards, whereas in the agricultural South shipbuilding facilities were pitiable. The Southern

States were further impeded in their prosecution of the war by their backwardness in social development. But by far the worst of all the obstacles was their unsatisfied economic need. As days grew into months and months into years, this need was more and more obviously felt. Even the well-to-do had to be content with a diet of coarse bread and potatoes. The troops could not be adequately fed and there was a lack of clothing and ammunition. One woollen blanket had to serve for three soldiers. Mass desertions were the rule. As it was realized that time was on the side of the North, so the morale of the Southern troops slackened and an improvement of conditions could only be hoped for from a victory of the North. Thus it came about that the progressive and industrial North defeated the South and American unity was preserved. This was of decisive importance for the future of world politics and especially in regard to Germany's chances of victory in the first World War. Meurer has said, as so many others: 'The heroic fight put up by the South was decided by the use of indirect means, namely the weapon of sea power. When the Mississippi was blockaded in 1863 freebooters were so strictly supervised that the blockade gradually transformed itself into a veritable hunger blockade. This was the forerunner of the blockade imposed by Great Britain on the Central Powers at a later date. Yet the implications of this earlier blockade were quite lost upon Germany, so that when a similar one was applied to the Central Powers during the 1914-18 conflict Germany had no notion how to deal with it. Just as in the Southern States the body economic suffered because of the decay of financial security, generalized poverty, scarcity of prime commodities and consequent hunger, so was it with Germany in the last war. The sufferings of the population in the Southern States were perhaps on a par with those endured by the Central Powers during the war of 1914-18.'

Yet all these things happened in the very same period of the nineteenth century when Germany was using her strategy of annihilation at Königgrätz and Sedan. She proved victorious in this strategy, succeeded in bringing about unity, founded the German Empire, and became the leading continental power of Europe.

It is quite comprehensible that Germany after 1870-71 should live on her recent experiences and learn nothing from prior events. But this same Germany marched into the future blindfold, burdened with obsolete notions, and doomed to adopt an uncritical attitude towards her military

possibilities. Yet a totally different outlook towards the recent conflict from that consequent upon Königgrätz and Sedan might have been expected. Germany should have noted the enormous development in the size of armies, the huge improvements in armaments; she should have realized that a war of movement was out of the question, and that the main opponent was to be Great Britain.

### CHAPTER III

## FROM WAR ON A CONTINENT TO WAR BETWEEN CONTINENTS

THE First German Reich which was founded in 1871 at Versailles, the very same spot where in 1918 it was to receive the death-blow, contained a population of 41,000,000. The population was, therefore, at the time larger than that of France. This discrepancy was to increase as the years rolled on. Yet in spite of this disadvantage, France was able to put 4,980,000 trained men into active service in 1914, when her total population was 39,900,000. Germany, on the other hand, possessed an army of 4,900,000 trained troops out of a total population of 67,000,000.

We read in the German official archives, when that publication is dealing with the question of rearmament policy between the years 1871-1914: 'The capacities and national energy of the French republic are being underestimated in Germany. The French government, upheld by the unflagging devotion of the French people, has in an unexpectedly short time succeeded in introducing many outstanding reforms into her military system . . . During the late 'seventies, the French "peace army" outnumbered the Germany army by about thirty thousand men in spite of having a population of six million less than that of Germany.'

On June 27th, 1872, a bill was passed reintroducing conscription and, even quicker than Engels could have dreamed, France became a nation-in-arms.

Neither of the belligerents in 1870-71 had spent more than about seven milliard marks, but France in addition to losing part of her territory had to pay five milliard francs as war indemnity. In the gold currency of the day, this sum amounted to four and a half milliard marks. Incredible as it may seem, this large sum was paid in full by September 5th, 1873, so that by the 13th the army of occupation had to leave French soil. The Franco-German war was the last of its kind to be paid for in hard cash.

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The enlarged field of economic exploitation, reforms in general, and the five milliard war indemnity fostered the growth of German industry. During the years 1851 to June 1870, two hundred and ninety-five joint

stock companies with a capital of two thousand four hundred and four million marks were founded in Germany. But in the short space of four years, from July 1870 to December 1874, no fewer than eight hundred and sixty-seven such companies with a capital of three thousand three hundred and six million marks came into existence.

After 1866, Bismarck had found his most reliable supporters among the National Liberal Party, whose members mainly consisted of upper- and middle-class bourgeois. Since, for historical reasons which it would take too long to explain here, the Jews played an important role in the economic life of Germany, the opponents of industrial progress identified capitalism with Judaism, and Bismarck, because he collaborated with the National Liberal Party, was nicknamed 'a friend of the Jews', and the epoch as a whole was called 'Jew-rule'. At the same time the state came into conflict with the Catholic Church.

The influence of the National Liberal Party sat uneasily on Bismarck's shoulders. At the start he had imagined that he could shake off the economic shackles and yet maintain the structure of the old body politic. But the rapid rise of the middle classes and the industrial development that ensued brought about an equally rapid growth of the labour movement, so that liberalism pressed hard both upon the upper ruling class and the labour movement. Besides these forces, Bismarck, and the landed gentry to which he belonged, felt themselves threatened by the important economic changes which were taking place. Apart from the weight of Russian competition in the agricultural sphere, America had begun to infiltrate into the European markets with her agricultural produce. The larger landowners who had looked upon free trade as part of the world order under Providence suddenly, in 1875, veered round and became champions of a protectionist policy. Ever since then, vested interests have regarded free trade as the expression of a Jewish liberal economic dispensation.

Together with the agrarian aristocrats, the industrial magnates fought sternly for the transition to protection. The former found supporters among the peasantry and handicraftsmen; the latter, among petty industrialists. These had, since 1871, been developing their enterprises chaotically. The owners of small capital were mainly interested in business on the exchange market and took part in very dubious industrial undertakings. When in 1873 the slump overtook them they completely

collapsed. At this juncture the Jews came in for much recrimination and there was a general demand for a strong government and 'the protection of national labour'. Bismarck was all the more willing to allow himself to be carried along with the tide because he needed adequate support in his struggle to maintain the authoritative state. It was during his regime that an alliance between the manorial estate and the blast furnace, that is to say, the landed aristocracy and the owners of heavy industry, originated. Ever since then this has proved the decisive factor in the fate of the German Reich. It was a coalition of interests which, after the inauguration of the democratic republic, aimed at reconquering its sometime hegemony. With this end in view, they allied themselves with the National Socialists.

Certain classes, with vested interests to protect, were in Bismarck's day consciously aware of their aversion from world trade and this was the first step to the policy of self-sufficiency so prevalent now. Generally speaking, such a policy is only looked upon as a war-time measure. But, as we shall see, that problem is not a simple one.

In many respects Germany's development after her victorious war of 1870-71 is comparable to her development after the defeat in 1918. In both instances the development was conditioned by the economic crisis which coincided with a devastating crisis in the spheres of industry and agriculture. Just as the crisis of 1928-33 enabled the National Socialists to come to power, so did that of 1873-78 render possible Bismarck's triumph over liberalism and socialism. This reactionary atavism found its most obvious expression in the Social Laws passed in 1878 which overshadowed the Iron Chancellor's policy until 1890. It was realized later that Bismarck's policy was to a great extent responsible for the collapse of his Reich in 1918.

*The Annual of Economics and Statistics* published in 1934 an article entitled 'Germany's Social Preparations before the World War'. In this we read: 'The period during which Bismarck, sword in hand as it were, endeavoured unsuccessfully to suppress the labour movement which was fighting for its rights may be looked upon as a decisive one, for it was this epoch which witnessed the introduction of the Social Laws — an attempt to suppress with threats, force, and violence the labour movement which was striving by its own initiative and strength to build up an organization of working men and women to defend themselves.' The article then goes on to say that this epoch left in the hearts of even the most moderate

Social Democrats a quite comprehensible feeling of outraged human dignity. This sense of outrage had never been alleviated, and it proved to be of supreme disadvantage to the German High Command the longer the war of 1914-18 lasted.

The laws introduced by Bismarck, or State Socialism, as he was fond of calling his regime, gave so vivid an expression to the struggle for the maintenance of the authoritative state that the industrial workers, especially the more class-conscious elements among them, could not find in them a substitute for their own ideals. They realized full well that even despotism can be exercised humanely just because it is despotism; and they were, consequently, all the more insistent on the maintenance of their hard-won rights and liberties.

Soon after the establishment of the First Reich, many military men in Germany looked upon the situation in the field of home politics with foreboding. Helmut von Moltke, the nephew of the victor at Sedan and later destined to become Chief of General Staff, wrote pessimistically to his betrothed on February 10th, 1878: 'Bad times lie ahead of us. If they do not come in the immediate future, come they will in the end. We shall both have to weather the storm as best we may. Do not bother your head about this. We are still living at the very beginning of these happenings. But I foresee them.'

Graf Waldersee, the then Chief of Staff to the 10th army, wrote in very similar terms. There is an entry in his diary for October 19th of the same year which runs: 'Sad events are coming in the near future. If only we could succeed in keeping the army intact!' In another entry he shows deep satisfaction that 'the liberal gentlemen, after their twelve years' government, will have to experience hard times'.

The consequences of the reactionary trend in home and foreign affairs were indeed ominous. The export of manufactured goods was rendered very difficult on account of the protectionist policy adopted by the government. This inevitably led to the idea of expanding the home market by colonization. Against his better judgment, Bismarck was driven to adopt the policy of colonization which inevitably brought him into conflict with Great Britain. Simultaneously, tension arose between Russia and Germany, for, as a grain exporting country, the former felt the pressure imposed by the protectionist policy of Germany. In addition to all these worries, Bismarck was obliged to defend his country against a resentful France by

seeking an alliance with Austria. But Austria was the rival of Russia in the Balkans. Amid these manifold contradictions, the Russo-German friendship was wrecked, though Bismarck set great store by it. And to add to the difficulties of the situation, Russia and France became allies so that already as early as 1887 the Reich which Bismarck had been at such pains to create was faced with the prospect of a war on two fronts.

About this date Friedrich Engels wrote that should it come to war, though the Prusso-German army possessed advantages on account of its superior organization it could never again expect to be placed in as favourable a position as in previous wars. 'Germany may find allies, but they will prove unreliable. The home front will not be comparable with that which existed during the wars of national unification. With ever increasing rapidity has the state alienated itself from the masses of the people, so that it now appears to be a conglomeration of landowners, men on the stock exchange, and industrialists who systematically exploit the people.'

'To think in terms of war policy is to think in terms of interdependence,' wrote Lieutenant-General Horst von Metzsch. And Engels' strong point was precisely this matter of interdependence, for he was no less an expert on economics and sociology than he was on military science. He could not, therefore, look upon the German victory of 1870-71 as the last word to be said about world history: nor was it without deep concern that he realized the almost insoluble problems facing the German war machine and the whole German nation. In the light of previous and recent experience, the German General Staff firmly believed that the next war would be a short one and would not lead to great complications. But Engels thought quite otherwise. He wrote from London in 1887: '... No other war is possible for Germany than a world war. Moreover this world war will be on a scale never previously experienced and more violent than could ever be anticipated. From eight to ten million soldiers will be at one another's throats and will eat Europe as bare as not even a swarm of locusts would have done. It will mean that the devastations caused by the Thirty Years' war will be compressed into three or four years and will extend to engulf the whole continent. It will be followed by famine, epidemics, general bestialization of the armies in the field and of the populations as a whole through actual want. There will be irremediable confusion in our artificially produced trade relationships, in

industry and credit, ending in universal bankruptcy, the collapse of the old established state systems and their traditional philosophy of state. Then will the crowns roll about the pavements with nobody interested enough to pick them up . . . Such is the outlook if each nation tries to vie with one another in the race for armaments. This competition, pushed to extreme limits, will bear its inevitable fruit. It is to such a calamity, my worthy princes and politicians, that your sagacity will lead our old Europe.'



Bismarck felt instinctively the peril which modern warfare constituted for the various dynasties. He insisted that all Germany's energies should be concentrated on the preservation of peace, since a war in which Germany did not come out victorious would mean the establishment of a republican regime. The dynasts, so he thought, formed a community of interests facing the danger of revolution and, were it for this reason alone, he desired to maintain friendly relations with Russia. He fully realized that the wars for national unification had been fought in the most favourable circumstances from the German point of view. It was with the utmost earnestness that he set about the task of formulating a peace policy after the conclusion of the 1870-71 campaign. His foreign policy harmonized with his home policy, and it is rare to see a reactionary statesman such as Bismarck showing such consistency in his undertakings. Knowing that a war policy would inevitably jeopardize his home policy, he proceeded to act with the utmost circumspection.

But in the end, the logic of events proved more powerful than the goodwill of the Iron Chancellor. When, in 1887, he refused to allow German finance capital to be invested in Russian bonds, the tsarist empire, plagued as it was with repeated crises and lack of ready money, turned to Paris. This may be regarded as the origin of the Franco-Russian alliance.

Bismarck was deeply concerned with home affairs just as he was in regard to foreign affairs. Protection, which favoured the landowners, was inimical to the manufacturers whose exports suffered considerably. In 1880, exports to Russia alone decreased from two hundred and eighty-eight millions to one hundred and thirty-one million marks. This brought the question of emigration to the forefront. Between the years 1881 and 1885 no less than 857,227 Germans left the Fatherland. He acted

in too mild a fashion on behalf of one section of the population albeit with too much harshness in respect of the others. When the young emperor William II came to the throne, he was so pressed on every hand that he dismissed Bismarck. William wanted to be his own master. His first act was to abolish the Social Laws and to introduce still more stringent ones.



The Social Democrats, who up till that time had been represented by nine members in the Reichstag, entered with thirty-five members after the elections of 1890. Radical liberalism, too, far from growing weaker under Bismarck's despotic regime, had gained in strength. Caprivi, who succeeded Bismarck as chancellor, remarked: 'Were we to continue on the same lines as our predecessors, we should undoubtedly ruin, not only our industrial undertakings and the workers, but probably bring about the downfall of the state as well.' Caprivi came to the conclusion that Germany had to export either men or commodities. Export of men, in other words emigration, was no solution were it only on account of the military problem it would introduce. Only by the export of manufactured goods could the mounting expenditure on armaments be met and the recruiting of men for the army be maintained. So he set about lowering the tax on imported corn, improved Germany's relations with Russia, concluded trade agreements which were economically favourable to his country, entered the path of liberalism to a certain extent, and sternly refused to countenance any further measures of violence against the Social Democrats.

Caprivi was a general endowed with a critical mind and in many ways was a realist. He did not, any more than the victor of Sedan, fancy for a moment that a future war would be as easy as earlier ones had been. Moltke in his old age came to understand the limits imposed upon his strategy of annihilation and he anticipated the trench war which was not to be born until many years had elapsed. Being a man of modest disposition, Moltke was well aware that he owed his victories not only to his genius but to a whole series of phenomena over which he could exercise no control. He once said: 'Even the best of men is doomed to failure when he comes up against the irresistible force of circumstance. How much more so is the man of mediocre ability likely to succumb?'

Although Moltke never knew defeat, it was he who said: 'Success alone decides the quality of a strategist. But it is difficult to ascertain to what extent success is due to a man's deserts and how much is due to favourable conditions.' Many a heroic legend served to darken counsel after 1871. But the hero himself remained impressively objective in outlook. In a speech he made in the Reichstag on May 14th, 1890, he told the nation that the duration, the form, and the issue of a war were not decided by the heroes of the occasion, but by mightier factors. Here are his very words: 'Gentlemen, when, like the sword of Damocles, the war which has been hanging over our heads for the last ten years does break out, only then shall we be in a position to judge of its duration and its end. The greatest European powers, armed as never before, will be attacking each other. None of them can be bested so completely as to be constrained to accept peace on any terms without rising again to renew the war were it only after a year's intermission. Gentlemen, it may turn out to be a war lasting seven or maybe thirty years. Woe to him who sets Europe ablaze and who lights the fuse which will blow up the powder barrel.'

But the German military caste failed to deduce from the old field-marshal's words their true implication, namely, that future warfare would undergo considerable change. Ignoring his insight, they merely put down his pessimistic outlook to his advanced years. They dealt with all the national and military problems facing Germany exclusively from the viewpoint of von Moltke's strategy which promised a short and victorious war of annihilation. The vision conjured up by their hero seemed to them too cruel and the consequences too ghastly to face.

Caprivi's premonitions were even clearer than old Moltke's. In the Reichstag of 1891 he declared: 'I am absolutely convinced that in the event of war, food both for the army and for the civilian population will play a decisive part.' He felt sceptical both as to Germany's military strength and her alliance with Italy. He thought it possible that Italy might change her allegiance and go over to the enemy. This actually took place, as we know, during the last war and is once more taking place under our very eyes to-day. He looked upon the traditional Russo-German friendship as irrevocably broken, the introduction of a new constitution as a mistake, and a war on two fronts—Russia on one side and France on the other—as certain. In a secret session of the Reichstag held on October 20th, 1892, he declared: 'The French army of to-day is

not to be compared with that which faced us in 1870-71. The present-day French territorial army is, to say the least of it, as efficient a body of men as those which Gambetta raised and with which we had so tough a struggle. We have to reckon now with the fortifications France has built up. Furthermore, the spirit which inspires the French armies to-day is completely altered from what it was in 1870. The idea that they are fighting for the republic, to avenge past defeats, and to recapture their lost provinces will be productive of a more inspired and universalized enthusiasm than the Second Empire could ever hope to have raised. Against such a foe, a swift decision is out of the question. Nay more, war with France will be both longer and more tenacious in quality. For our part, we shall have fewer troops at our disposal for the protection of other parts of the Reich.'

In spite of these opinions, Caprivi considered that Germany would be able to live through such a war — 'or at least play for a delaying action', he added characteristically and quite in contradiction with the principle embodied in the strategy of annihilation. He was of the opinion that in the last resort Germany would always find allies to make a stand for her rights. In the first ranks of such possible allies he thought of Great Britain, who at that time seemed the only ray of sunshine amid the gloomy prospect of a war on two fronts.

Caprivi was gravely concerned about the traditionalism still extant in the German army. He complained that instead of introducing thorough-going reforms after the successes of 1870-71, there had been 'only a bit of patching' in the old structure. In 1806, he said, Prussian army organization had been abreast of the times, but that the severe defeats she suffered at that date might have been avoided if the example set by France had been followed at the crucial moment. Now again it was imperative to follow France's example. Yet that was not possible without placing the whole existence of the state in jeopardy. The text of the Constitution of the Reich made it clear that every able-bodied man was to become a soldier. But Caprivi knew very well that these military duties were not being fulfilled.

At a later day, General Gröner wrote: 'Tradition blocks the path to the building up of a genuinely modern army. All too frequently the Reichstag is held responsible for the insufficient utilization of our population. It has to be recognized that our government has failed to embark on a

policy adequate to the needs of an army formed along the lines of a militia. Had it done its duty in this respect, parliamentary difficulties might have been more readily overcome.' Caprivi followed the way indicated by Gröner and thus he succeeded in creating a far larger army. But since his suggestions implied important concessions to the Reichstag and a curtailment of the period of military service, the conservatives became restive. Waldersee, who was chief of General Staff from 1888 till 1891 when he was replaced by Schlieffen, wrote in his diary: 'I should very much like to end my military career now.'

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In other lands besides Germany, the army has a tendency to play a special part in relation to the rest of the population. To a certain extent this is unavoidable. In France the problem was not nearly so pressing a one as in Imperial Germany because of the fundamentally different nature of the political and social structure of the republic. Moreover, France was far less militarily minded than Germany, and this made it easier for the nation and the army to merge into an organic unity. The French democratic regime made use of conscription more effectively than did the highly militarized state of Germany.

Engels wrote to August Bebel, the German socialist leader: 'The existing system by no means excludes the possibility of war.' At about the same date, Waldersee noted in his diary: 'Our leaders should recognize the fact that, in the event of war being declared, we are in a most unfavourable position. On both fronts we shall be confronted with an enemy numerically superior to our forces. If we should lose the war, it would mean complete collapse so far as we are concerned. Other nations can bear up under defeat. We cannot. The German Reich will crumble to pieces, the republicans will gain the upper hand, and the Hohenzollern dynasty will have to go into exile.' This was written on April 26th, 1892.

It is a remarkable fact that the diaries and memoirs of leading personalities and military men in the German empire contain a wealth of similar pessimistic utterances. The documents which have come down to us from the Imperial Archives fail to show any of the optimism displayed in public. The strange thing is not so much the collapse of Imperial Germany as the fact that she was able to hold out as long as she did and achieved results which have won admiration even from opponents such as Churchill.

who possess a spirit of fair play and recognize what is good in an opponent.

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Serious-minded politicians in Germany no longer dispute the obvious truth that the Reich drew her strength from the fabulous development of her industrial and technical resources and was thus enabled to 'hang on' so long. Conservatism in Germany has a character all its own and can in no way be identified with that which exists in other countries. Under Caprivi's chancellorship, the conservatives maintained that the military power of the nation is rooted in the soil, and for this very reason industrialism is an evil.

At that date the conservatives failed in preventing the signing of trade agreements which were along the lines of national industrialization. Thus from 1893-1906, once Caprivi's agreements expired, German exports rose from three milliard to roughly seventeen milliard marks, while imports rose from about four milliard to nine milliard marks. Not only did emigration stop, but foreign workers streamed into Germany. Consequently there was a staggering rise in the industrial proletariat which made its weight felt in the social and political field. It was for this very reason that large sections of conservatives put the brake on as long as possible, for they dreaded, and therefore wished to retard, the process of industrialization. They were on the horns of a dilemma. They disliked the consequences of exporting German manufactured articles while at the same time they could not agree to the export of men. They therefore claimed certain territories with a view to colonization and thus extending the market for German goods. It seemed to them that Russia was the most hopeful country wherein to start such a scheme. This naturally drew the French and Russian governments into closer collaboration, although the official German policy did not aspire at that time to conquering Russian territory by force of arms.

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The most vigorous champion of this policy was the Pan-German Society (Alldeutscher Verband) which came to birth in 1891. From the outset it was aggressively reactionary in home and foreign affairs. Gradually it became the most active fighter against socialism, liberalism, the Jews, the British, the Russians, and the French, while in later days it

dominated German international and naval policy. Just as in Imperial Germany liberalism and socialism formed the left opposition which was to take the helm of the republican state in 1918, so did the *Alldeutscher Verband* in organization and ideology form the advance guard of the right opposition from which in the end the Third Reich was born.

This Pan-German Society consisted of princes, big landed gentry, officers, diplomats, higher civil servants, professors, industrialists, and so forth. The Society had members in almost every administrative office and key positions in the army and in many private offices. It was passionately opposed to Caprivi and his new political trends.

Caprivi retained the chancellorship until 1894. After his fall from power, he was greatly disturbed by the activities of influential members of the Officers' Corps who associated themselves to so large an extent with the agrarian movement among the landowning class. In a private letter he wrote: 'When our Junkers begin to base their convictions on the amount of their income, and their loyalty to the crown on what the country can produce to their advantage, then the best of our small aristocracy is in process of destruction. The value of this class to the Fatherland becomes in these circumstances so meagre that we cannot but ask ourselves whether it is worth our while to make such sacrifices on its behalf.'



After Caprivi had retired from office, measures were considered from time to time to suppress the labour movement by force. Waldersee, who at that time was very active on the home front, regretted that the socialists did not mount barricades so that an opportunity might be afforded to 'liquidate' them once and for all. Engels wrote in 1895, shortly before his death: 'Our opponents are ill advised to think us so foolish. We now have forty-three representatives in parliament, and are getting thick headed by acting so strictly as law-abiding citizens.' It was in the course of this historic period that Germany, together with other nations, began to turn the tables against opponents, so that revolutionaries became, as it were, conservatives and conservatives revolutionaries.

Both on the home front and in foreign affairs, Germany was heading for catastrophe. Prince Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, a friend and adviser of the Kaiser, wrote to Herr von Holstein, leader of Germany's

foreign policy, that only by a successful war could the emperor's prestige be re-established and social conditions be stabilized. To which Holstein answered: 'I agree that a war in which we came out as victors might be an excellent thing. But we need a just cause now precisely as we had in 1870. In any case, it must not be an offensive war and the prospects for engaging in a war of defence are scant indeed. Nobody seems to be animated with the desire to do us harm.' In a letter dated July 1897 Holstein further wrote that the recent sudden twist rightwards had rendered the home front precarious, but by switching over to foreign affairs this might bring about a healthier situation in Germany herself. 'So far as I personally am concerned, I'd rather be far away when such things take place.'



A month earlier, the emperor had appointed Admiral von Tirpitz as Secretary of State. In 1895 this same admiral had written: 'We must push naval interests to the fore because our task as a nation and the economic gains involved would serve as a palliative against both educated and uneducated Social Democrats.' An epoch was thus born during which German naval and world policy led to the creation of the Franco-Russian entente. This in its turn brought about the encirclement of Germany.

The naval and world policy embarked upon by Germany during these years cannot be explained by the customary reasons — such as the vital needs of the German people or Germany's industrial development. Emil Rathenau, father of Walther who later received his death at the hands of the Nazis, was an enthusiastic champion of the industrialized state. Yet this outstanding and successful pioneer on the international stage of trade and commerce declared: 'By the development Germany has achieved in her trade relations abroad she has proved that, even with a small fleet of merchantmen and men-of-war, much can be wrought in the international field.' Together with other critics, he drew attention to the obvious contradiction that the government had bought an agreement from the agrarians for permission to build ships and launch the new naval policy while at the same time passing measures which could not fail to hamper industry and trade. 'It is sheer nonsense', declared Emil Rathenau, 'to protect foreign trade with a fleet of battleships, while at home every endeavour is being made to impede its growth.'

Those who were responsible for Caprivi's fall from power on account of his national policy in regard to industry and commerce, and who spoke of the blessings which would accrue once self-sufficiency within Germany was attained, now threw in their lot with the advocates of the new naval and international policy. Indeed, they were its most fanatical supporters. The liberals and social democrats maintained that Germany needed to carry on an international policy, but not the ruthless and unscrupulous one now envisaged. Its supporters were out, not to bring about a blossoming of Germany's industries such as Caprivi contemplated, but, as Franz Mehring wrote, 'They intend to put a stop to industrial development at that point where it collides with the interests of the reactionary classes.' And he continues: 'Above all else they wish to avoid the emancipation of the proletariat which forms so essential a lever in the growth of industrialism. Since to safeguard their present and future interests the German labour movement aims at strengthening industry as much as possible, the working classes cannot give their support to this new international and naval policy.' Max Weber, the eminent historian of economics and sociology, who was likewise an outstanding personality among the politicians of Imperial Germany, adduced much the same sort of arguments.

Later inquiries into the history of the times confirmed Mehring and others' opinions. Eckart Kehr was among the most meritorious and astute of these investigators. Unfortunately he died at an early age, but he dealt admirably with this intricate problem and has handed down to us a most scholarly analysis in his work *Schlachtflottenbau und Parteipolitik*, which was written during the years 1894-1901, and found publication in 1930 at Berlin. It is an essay on a transverse section through the political, social, and ideological assumptions of German imperialism. It is full of documentary evidence and information. The author came to the conclusion that the character and the forms taken by the German international and commercial policy of those days were determined by the social problems which faced the Reich. There is hardly a work in existence so fraught with significance as regards the relationship between the economic situation, home and foreign affairs, and the whole policy of armament. That which even to-day seems chaotic is proved in an orderly and logical manner. It sheds a clear pencil of light on what was at that time German naval propaganda and the part played by the *Alldeutscher*

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Verband. It further reveals what the interested groups behind the propaganda were up to and the full activities of the Alldeutscher Verband. Above everything else, it demonstrates that the navy was counted upon to achieve triumphs abroad. Success in the field of foreign affairs was to dispel the idea that the social problem could not find a solution and to reinforce the notion that the extant social order should be maintained.



Kehr is of opinion that in his own peculiar way the Kaiser correctly assessed the situation, for he wrote to von Bülow who had been Chancellor from 1900 to 1909: 'To start with we shall have to smoke out the socialists, behead them as it were, thus rendering them innocuous. If necessary this will have to be done by wholesale massacre. This will be followed by war abroad. But the order of procedure will have to be as stated and it cannot be executed a tempo.' But Kehr's remark 'in his own peculiar way' points to the fact that the author of this notable work sees the whole affair on the background of William II's character. The Kaiser delighted in such bluntly worded phrases because he reckoned that they showed his strength. But Kehr implies that the gist of the Kaiser's policy finds expression in his letter to von Bülow where he laid down the general principles which served him as guide. At the same time, as Kehr points out, and what he has to say is substantiated by the memoirs of people who were in close touch with the imperial court, the Kaiser was afraid to go to war because of the situation on the home front. It was not so much war which they wanted as victories. Secretary of State von Tschirschky expressed this anxiety as follows: 'If we embark on this policy of the typical adventurer, it is impossible to foresee its outcome. That lies on the knees of the gods.' This is, according to Kehr, the decisive problem. Kehr says that the first World War cannot be explained in its manifold developments merely in the perspective of international and naval policy, though this point of view has numerous advocates. The question is far more intricate. At all events, the fact that Great Britain picked up the gauntlet against Germany is self-explanatory and needs no further elaboration here.

Of course there were certain Britishers who were not best pleased at Germany's economic expansion; nor did London see eye to eye with those Germans who clamoured for colonies. Furthermore, British

## THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

politicians who were engaged in foreign affairs showed themselves to be particularly jumpy at Germany's progress in the direction of Bagdad, for in this business the safety of India was concerned. But Great Britain was open to suggestions and negotiations, and she proved herself ready and willing to enter into such deliberations. But every question was so beset with difficulties arising out of the intensive naval propaganda and policy which was extremely hostile to Great Britain that in the long run any agreement proved to be impossible. Leaders of German industry and commerce, diplomats, and historians repeatedly pointed out even before the war of 1914-18 that the only obstacle in the way of an Anglo-German agreement was the question of the navy. But so long as it was not universally understood just what the navy means as the essential protection of the British Isles, both as a method of provisioning the mother country and preserving the integrity of the commonwealth or empire, any such agreement was out of the running.



Since Germany continued to be the greatest military power on the continent of Europe it was impossible for Great Britain to countenance any claims made by the Reich to be allowed ascendancy in the matter of sea power as well. Were such supremacy at sea permitted, it would mean sooner or later that Germany would assume the hegemony of Europe as a whole. No attack by the German navy was contemplated at the time, but many fancied that Great Britain could be coerced into accepting Germany's plans, and this without declaring war. Tirpitz affirmed that were the German navy powerful enough, an attack from Britain would so weaken the British navy that supremacy would no longer be a force to reckon with. Tirpitz' idea was popularly known as 'the risk idea', and it was upon this that the entire shipbuilding programme of Germany was based. Needless to say, 'the risk idea' was extremely risky, for very naturally Great Britain did not accept the notion passively while giving time for the completion of von Tirpitz' policy. It was characteristic of the narrowness of outlook among those of the Tirpitz persuasion that they persisted in their policy even when it became obvious to everyone that it was wholly fantastic. In later days, German naval policy proved to be equally purblind.

While Germany was working out her new international and naval

policy, von Schlieffen, who at that time was Chief of General Staff (1891-1905), conceived his plan for waging a war on two fronts, for everyone by then realized that before long the struggle between Germany with France on one side of her and Russia on the other was inevitable. Schlieffen was a man of the Clausewitz school, and he went all out for a huge battle of annihilation in the west. He modelled his strategy on that of Hannibal's great victory at Cannae in 216 B.C. By his better strategy, this Punic general completely annihilated the 75,000 Roman forces with his inferior troops which numbered only 50,000. Schlieffen asked himself what should prevent superior strategy in modern times from compensating for inferiority in numbers and so lead to a swift decision. With this end in view, Schlieffen studied all the phases of Hannibal's campaign which led to the victory at Cannae. He set to work with typical concentration and after many years of intensive toil elaborated what has come to be known as 'the Schlieffen plan'.

Carthage, notwithstanding Hannibal's efforts, lost the war, and we now know the reason. Great military commander as Hannibal was, he suffered defeat at the last and took poison while in exile. His triumph at Cannae served as model to the German Chief of General Staff. After a start had been made on Tirpitz' naval policy, it would have been wise for the German authorities to explore the causes of Hannibal's failure and the reasons which had led to his victory at Cannae. For the tension which existed between Great Britain and Germany brought into the foreground all the problems connected with the traditional strategy of annihilation. How could such a strategy cope with the counter-strategy of attrition, the blockade of continental Europe, by a power which enjoyed supremacy at sea? So alarmed was von Schlieffen by the prospect of this policy of exhaustion that he failed to give it a moment's consideration. In 1909 he wrote: 'The strategy of attrition is not feasible when the provisioning of millions of soldiers and civilians can only be maintained by the expenditure of milliards for supplies.' This continued to be his opinion to the last. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 had demonstrated that the strategy of a speedy decision on account of great developments in the firing power of modern armaments was highly problematical. Soldiers had to take to the spade and dig themselves in. Yet this example had no effect on Schlieffen's conclusions. It may be argued that in the case of the Russo-Japanese war, the men engaged in the fighting forces did not possess

the qualities of those in the German army. But all this aside, Schlieffen went on believing, were it for economic reasons alone, that it was wiser to adhere uncompromisingly to the strategy of 'quick decision. In 1905 he wrote: 'Over there in Manchuria, each army can oppose the other from impregnable positions for months on end. This is not the case in western Europe. Such a strategy would be of too spendthrift a nature. The thousand wheels which run the machinery for the provisioning of millions of men cannot be stopped for any considerable length of time. We must try to conquer and annihilate the enemy with the utmost speed.'



Industrial Germany, being more and more involved in international trade, was incapable of sustaining a protracted war. So far Schlieffen's principle was correct, for 'the very existence of the nation depends upon an uninterrupted flow in the stream of trade and industry'. In view of these economic problems Schlieffen's theory was fundamentally right when he wrote in 1909 that 'by a swift decision the wheels of industrial life must be set to work again as soon as possible'. But what if the carrying out of Schlieffen's ideas proved to be impracticable and Moltke and Caprivi were correct in their estimate? Could Schlieffen's notions be put into execution if Germany had to fight Great Britain? Such questions, though they were vital to the preservation of the German state, remained unanswered. Captain Ritter, whom I have already had occasion to quote, declared: 'A protracted war was *a priori* rejected by the German General Staff on strictly economic grounds in spite of the fact that from the military point of view such a factor was all in the day's work. The wish in this matter was father to the thought.' But though a short war was clearly indicated so far as Germany was concerned, it was impossible to blink the fact that a lengthy war was inevitable. In this dilemma, the German General Staff staked its all on one card, states Ritter in his book summarizing the issue of 1914-18 entitled *Kritik der Weltkriege* (Critique of the World War).

It must be admitted in all fairness that the German General Staff was not alone in thinking that the future war would be a short one. In other countries besides Germany this concept was predominant. Not a single country made any preparations in the industrial field. But though other lands reckoned on a short war, the reasons upon which these calculations

were based were not at all similar to those which influenced Germany. There the issue could be expressed, as Captain Ritter said, 'as staking everything on one card'. But this was not the case with Great Britain nor even with France. These two powers had free access to the ocean highways while simultaneously bottling up Germany's sea-going vessels, or so far as France was concerned, rendering access to the sea very difficult. Thus neither France nor Great Britain was threatened to the same extent. In case a war should break out and a speedy outcome not be achieved, the economic perils which Germany would have to face, situated as she is in the very heart of continental Europe, cut off from access to the seas, were terrible for the Central Powers but slight for both Great Britain and France. Everybody hoped that the war would be a short one if only for technical, military, financial, and other reasons. Indeed, for many a short war was a foregone conclusion. For the countries with a valuable outlet to the sea, a war meant more or less intense discomfort, not to say suffering. But for a blockaded Germany it meant something infinitely worse. Germany should, therefore, more than any other country, have dealt seriously with the problem of 'duration of war', for in her case the probability of total collapse in the event of a protracted struggle was practically unavoidable. Germany's foes had two formidable advantages: first they had not to contend with a blockade, and secondly they were numerically so superior that their hopes for a speedy conclusion were better founded than were those of Germany.



According to the Reich's archives, all the experts were of the opinion that it was beyond the scope of man to prepare German economic life in advance so as to be able to sustain a war lasting four and a half years. Later, I shall give the relevant passage from the archives in its actual wording and at the same time shall deal more fully with this matter. But here I wish to say that in my opinion the problem, in so far as human judgment is concerned, could not be solved by purely military methods. In countless German periodicals and other publications we find it stated that the foreign policy adopted by Germany placed her strategists face to face with an insoluble task, since the war would have to be waged simultaneously against France, Russia, and Great Britain. The only chance of victory lay in coming to terms either with Russia or with Great Britain beforehand.

Historians such as Kehr and later his friend Wolfgang Hallgarten in his work *Pre-War Imperialism* (*Vorkriegsimperialismus*, Paris, 1933), were research specialists who probed deeply into the facts. They examined the why and wherefore of the political and social structure of William II's state and the reasons which led Germany into conflict with Russia and Great Britain. To a serious historian the failure of the diplomats is of minor importance. Major considerations have to be taken into account. In Imperial Germany almost everyone was dubious as to the validity of the foreign policy pursued. Yet the whole political and social structure of the state made it impossible to adopt any other. Moreover, the armaments policy could not be assimilated to the requirements of the existing foreign policy. Hence the pessimism of many leading personalities and the hope that the coming war would be quickly over became a stable doctrine.

Confidence in a swift termination of the war ran high and influenced the measures that were taken to ensure the production of war material. In the archives of the Reich we read: 'The problem of replacing the material consumed at the front dominated every plan and method. Unfortunately the endeavour to throw into the struggle the necessary material by speeding up production and ever-renewed war requisites was ignored.' Production was based on the experience of yesteryear. Germans of the military caste, being hidebound traditionalists, did not bother themselves with the unsolved problems of social life and the politically unsatisfied labour movement. All they thought of was the actual waging of war. In other lands these problems had been faced and more or less adequately dealt with. Anyone who had a modicum of insight as to what the future held became a confirmed pessimist and advocated drastic measures as a preliminary to the introduction of reforms in the social structure, thus forestalling both liberalism and the demands of the labour movement. Even so, these necessary reforms were considered less essential so long as the coming war could eventuate in a speedy decision. In addition to the economic problems facing Germany, the political and social situation demanded a quick and decisive victory for German arms, and dominated all other issues. For these reasons and many others, the German military caste ignored the economic problems altogether. Gröner, who was one of the most outspoken among German generals, declared that the schedule of studies in the military academies did

not include a course in economics. Although books were written about war economy, Major Hess stated in his work on the notion of war economy: 'such matters do not come within the scope of military literature'.

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Just because the militarists stuck their heads into the sand and paid passionate and confident respect to Clausewitz' strategy of annihilation, they failed to recognize the great problems which the future war was likely to involve. Broad-minded civilians possessed better insight. Moltke and Caprivi foresaw much, but both were outsiders and neither was capable of understanding the issue as the civilian, Friedrich Engels, did. Another civilian, Bloch, was indubitably endowed with more far-reaching insight. He was a Polish banker and Russian Councillor of State. In the 'nineties of the last century he wrote a huge book entitled *The Future War and its Technical, Economic, and Political Significance*. The work runs into six massive volumes and found publication in a German translation in 1899.

This scholar's industry is stupendous and his researches, together with the correlation of facts, amazing. After careful and detailed investigation of the technique of warfare in general, and of new methods and army organization, he came to the conclusion that in all probability a future war would not be a short one but a long one. In this he agreed with Moltke. Owing to the immense firing power of modern weapons, so Bloch declared, the war would very soon reach a stalemate, for no army would be able to put up a firm stand against the enemy nor would the soldiers wish to persist in the struggle. Bloch maintained that the millions of men engaged would dig themselves into trenches and stay facing one another and threatening one another, but neither side would be capable of dealing the decisive blow. Bloch openly agreed with Engels in declaring that in any event whole nations would become bankrupt and that the social structure would collapse. War could no longer be waged in the old way. The strategists of the ancient order had outlived their day. The decision of the issue lay in the hands of General Famine. This prophetic banker goes on to say that when military authors persist in regarding the future war as one of 'the annihilation of the enemy', they are merely showing how narrow-minded and out of date they are. The epoch of 'annihilation' is a thing of the dead past, as is also the period of 'cabinet

warfare'. In the coming war, whole nations will be mobilized, and not merely the army proper. Moreover, the war will involve the entire continent of Europe and this, for social and economic reasons, will hold a specially grave menace for Germany. Curiously enough, Bloch's prognostications concerning the Russian situation are extremely favourable. One can only suppose that as Councillor of State to the tsarist empire he wished to guide his master into the paths of peace. In the Russia of that day, it was impossible to write in plain terms about the parlous condition of the country. Bloch was, therefore, unable to influence the tsar or endow him with the necessary authority to bring into being a successful international peace policy. Moreover, no one can be expected to foresee every eventuality. Taken as a whole — and this is the only thing that matters with such works as that of Bloch — the book was an admirable and penetrating anticipation of the future.

Bloch devotes the third volume of this work to a study of naval warfare. Here, he declares, that equipped with modern ideas and modern armament a sea power is capable of 'economically weakening the enemy, of ruining entire nations, and of bringing to the verge of starvation entire nations by cutting off communications on the ocean highways, thus severing the economic life of inland peoples from the rest of the world'. Everything points to the probability that, in the event of war in Europe, trade by sea will be stopped. To which Bloch adds: 'The result might be the outbreak of revolutionary movements. Under pressure of these, one government or the other might be compelled to sue for peace before the object for which the war was started found a solution.' Thus Bloch, in his comprehensive survey of extant military, strategic, social, and economic conditions, came to the conclusion 'to form a judgment as to the outcome of the future war merely on technical grounds and the possible military results from military operations is not sufficient. What happened in previous campaigns does not apply to the future, for in all likelihood future wars will not be ended by a greater or smaller decisive victory over one or the other opposing forces, but by the disintegration of the machinery of warfare, consequent upon influences exercised by the economic and sociological conditions.' (Vol. vi, p. 63.)

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Neither Moltke nor Caprivi, though both took so passionate an interest in the coming war, reckoned upon Great Britain as rallying to the side of

the enemy. How much more pessimistic they would have been had they been able to foresee such an eventuality. Caprivi's anxieties in regard to the problem of provisioning the army and the civilian population were not due to his realization that the German seaboard would be closed by the British navy. His sole apprehension lay in the possibility of a French blockade. Having come to the conclusion that Germany could no longer be a self-supporting community, he endeavoured to secure that German import and export trade should run smoothly, and this by two methods. First by working hand in hand with Great Britain in the realm of foreign affairs, and secondly by constructing a sufficiency of vessels to run the blockade. This latter course was specially aimed at France and, when the propitious moment arrived, at Russia as well. Caprivi, who was chief at the Admiralty from 1883 to 1888, therefore disclosed his plans to the Reichstag on March 8th, 1893. He opened the discussion by talking of a maritime force capable of running a blockade. His agrarian opponents, however, protested violently, declaring that the correct solution of the problem was to help agriculture and thus to provide Germany with a sufficiency of food to meet any emergency. They failed to consider the consequences of such a policy to industrial exports. Caprivi started from the premise that in the circumstances which were likely to prevail, the idea that Germany could provide for her own needs was hopelessly out of date. The agrarians, especially those producing corn, estimated that such a measure would react adversely upon the peasant producer. The tariff imposed in 1902, which was a governmental and industrial sop to the agrarians so that they should abandon their hostile attitude to the increase in shipbuilding, received commendation from interested parties who described it as a great national gesture since it allegedly safeguarded provisioning Germany with food grown on her own soil.

It is worth mentioning that Germany entered the 1914-18 war totally unprepared either industrially or agronomically to meet the emergency. This opinion is almost universally shared. But this view is only tenable in so far as the alleged ability of Germany to subsist on her own resources should war be declared proved in the event to be a profound mistake. Ever since 1902, the owners of broad acres considered that the problem of provisions had been satisfactorily solved. Professor Skalweit, in his work *German Food Supplies in War Time* (published under the auspices of the Carnegie Trust in a series of books dealing with the economic and

social history of the World War), declares explicitly: 'While the German landed gentry were squabbling about protection of home agricultural produce as a means to a self-supporting Fatherland, they took it for granted that their goal could easily be won.' In Imperial Germany the fact was constantly being hammered home that Great Britain's native agriculture had been ruined in favour of 'the interests of finance capital', whereas Germany's situation in this respect was a favourable one should war break out. Great Britain, on the other hand, would be unfavourably situated owing to the short-sighted policy which she had pursued and which had deprived her of her means of supporting herself. But here the Germans forgot to take into account British sea power through which, among other things, supplies could be assured. Nor did they realize that the belauded self-sufficiency of Germany was a figment of the imagination. But since the tariff imposed in 1902 had allegedly safeguarded this self-sufficiency, any doubt cast upon it had to be repressed if the whole structure of the agrarian agitation were not to tumble down and the truth come to light. Consequently, the Ministry of Home Affairs, which was responsible for the solution of the problem of provisions and which was dominated by the conservatives, obstinately refused to consider any arguments brought forward by critics. General Bergmann wrote in the Reichsarchiv under date of December 31st, 1926: 'The Ministry of Home Affairs shows positive shyness in dealing seriously with the matter, and this shyness seems to be insuperable.' To which a Reichsarchiv editorial rejoins: 'At any rate, the shyness of the Ministry of Home Affairs in regard to economic war preparations seems to be very obvious!'

All the scientific memoranda and warnings were ignored and the Ministry insisted obstinately that no drastic criticism should be published, especially if it set out to prove that Germany in case of war would have to go hungry. Any such comment was looked at askance as 'disturbing'. In German naval circles, where the Fatherland's chances of success in actual fighting against Great Britain were pretty freely discussed, the 'hunger theory' had its supporters as early as 1905. But such anxieties were treated with a snap of the fingers. Yet all the time everyone knew that German agriculture could cover only 90 per cent of the Fatherland's need for food and this solely on condition that peace was maintained, world trade a flourishing enterprise, and the import of materials for the production of fats and meat which were needed in great abundance

should flow steadily. Such were the facts, and the World War very quickly revealed them to be true.

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The results of protection were of dubious value and brought about grave repercussions both in home and foreign policy. In spite of every hindrance, industrialization flourished irresistibly and the struggle between industry and agriculture became increasingly acute. Europe in general was being more and more industrialized. This meant that Germany and the rest of the European continent, having no market for export goods, lacking food and raw materials, were in a parlous state. It also implied that as year followed year, the continent grew increasingly sensitive to a possible blockade. Meanwhile, the weight of British sea power made itself felt. If Great Britain were dragged into war, what chance was there of winning the hoped-for victory by means of a glorious 'Cannae'? Three years before the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, the historian Johannes Krohmayer in his study of Hannibal and the Carthaginian victory at Cannae (*Rome's Struggle for World Dominion*) came to the conclusion that 'the strategy of annihilation on the grand scale can be worn down through the skilful use of the strategy of attrition'. Krohmayer did not hesitate to apply this teaching to his own time and continues: 'This is an impressive truth and perhaps not without practical value in our own day, for we have grown up in the tradition left to us by Napoleon and Moltke. The strategy of annihilation has come to be looked upon as one of singular efficiency and because both of its protagonists have aroused our admiration it has developed into a dogma.

'This strategy has assumed such proportions that it excludes all other considerations. It constitutes the main problem for Germany since Great Britain has to be reckoned with as a possible antagonist in the event of war.' According to Gröner and others, Schlieffen is supposed to have regarded Great Britain's intervention as a *sine qua non*. Therefore he must have been of opinion that the United Kingdom, after the swift defeat of her continental allies, could be made to face an accomplished fact. Be this as it may, such a theory leads us to assume that a quick decision was considered a vital necessity so far as Germany was concerned. Though no doubt could remain as to the urgency and although Schlieffen time and again demanded military reforms, the German army expanded to only

a very slight extent during the first decade of the twentieth century. On 15th Feb. 1891, the War Minister Gossler wrote to Schlieffen that the army had by then reached such a degree of expansion that 'it has already surpassed the limits of healthy growth and this involves serious dangers'. In the same year, a general of von Eiben's calibre stated it as his conviction that the armaments race must be stopped'. Later, he became Minister of War and in this capacity he wrote to Schlieffen on April 19th, 1904: 'It is not advisable to build up new formations.' This especially applied to the officer problem, 'because in such case we should not be able to prevent the selection of a large number of democratic elements as officers who would prove unfitted to cope with the rank and file'. Schlieffen died on January 16th, 1913. Two weeks later, Heeringen, who was then Minister of War, wrote to Moltke, Chief of General Staff, that the endeavour to form three new army corps was of dubious value. 'The question of finding suitable officers of both commissioned and non-commissioned rank is of superlative importance.' For the Officers' Corps would have to be supplemented from 'rather unsuitable classes, so that, other dangers apart, it will run the risk of becoming democratic'.

After his fall from power, Bismarck was asked up to what level the German army should be expanded. If we are to believe Oldenburg-Januschau, the Iron Chancellor answered: 'The limit of expansion depends on the composition of the Officers' Corps.' Owing to the internal situation, a limit had to be imposed and, in fact, it was imposed. The struggle to increase the army thereupon became more and more acrimonious, for the liberals and social democrats were growing stronger day by day while all the time Europe was swinging closer and closer to the conflagration of 1914-18. The majority of the militarists maintained that the peasant makes the best soldier. This was no chance theory. Baron von Loringhoven, an infantry general, was one of the few outsiders who emphasized the fact that the industrial worker, even if we choose to ignore the modern technique of war, possessed the flexibility of mind essential to the waging of modern war, and this to a far higher degree than did the rural recruit. During the World War, as this general was at pains to point out, his contention proved correct. He looked at the problem from the right angle. Nevertheless, for social and political reasons, it was urgently necessary to prevent the scales of army organization from shifting in favour of the modern industrial classes. Thus Imperial Germany

was faced, not only with an officer problem, but also with a recruiting problem. A surprisingly high percentage of able-bodied townsmen were exempted from joining the army because they were industrial workers and social democrats. No wonder, then, that General Schlichting came into collision with the interests of the Officers' Corps when he tried to adapt military tactics to the most up-to-date technical methods of warfare, thereby bringing the more intelligent elements of his countrymen into direct contact with the army. This all goes to prove that, as many a German emphasized repeatedly, 'the army of William II had a certain antipathy to the introduction of the technical element into the domain of warfare'.

Professor Haber, of the chemical industry, tells us that the army was not in the least 'technically minded' and that the soldier and the technician in Imperial Germany met 'only on the staircase'. The tremendous potentialities of German technique were not even sketchily used by the High Command. The important part tanks were destined to play during the later stages of the 1914-18 War was grossly underestimated. The airplane and the submarine suffered from a similar lack of appreciation. To-day, these weapons are responsible for Germany's initial successes, and many think that they hold the promise of final victory. Just as a defeat often acts as a stimulant, so victories frequently lead to conservatism. In France, after the defeat of 1871, responsible persons had a keener insight into many things than had the Germans. France had already made considerable progress in the development of her military aircraft while German parliamentarians were still vainly endeavouring to arouse interest in airplanes among the members of the High Command. Gotheim, one of the most outstanding personalities in the liberal camp and in the Reichstag, reports that General Falkenhayn, who was destined to play a big role in the World War, explained to him that he had been called upon by the General Staff to give his verdict at that time about air strategy. Falkenhayn said that in his opinion 'Zeppelins were not much good, while airplanes counted for nothing at all'.

When the Frenchman Blériot crossed the Channel in twenty-seven minutes on July 25th, 1909, it never entered the German militarists' minds that a few years later German pilots would cross this same Channel with quite a different end in view. On the other hand, the destruction of armies, fortresses, and naval units in Europe by air strategy was already the

subject of discussion. The airplane, as is the fate of every new-fangled weapon, was as greatly underestimated as it was overestimated.



The 'Flying Week' held in Rheims at the end of August 1909 demonstrated the vast possibilities of the airplane. Impressed by this event and by the remarkable feats of the French pilots, the German High Command slowly began to take an interest in this weapon. But it was only after the 'German Emperor Manœuvres' of 1911, when the importance of the airplane for reconnaissance work had been fully demonstrated, that the General Staff decided to create a body of trained pilots. On October 1st the issue was settled, though another year elapsed before the Royal Prussian Air Force came into existence. In the same year, France had 234 fully trained military pilots whereas Germany had only 50. Still, the disproportion was considerably less than it had been in 1909 when the disparity stood at ten to nought. By 1911, France had 170 to Germany's 25 military pilots. The relative numbers for 1912 were 344 as against 100. At the outbreak of the war, approximately 1200 front-line planes were at the Entente's disposal, while the Germans could merely put up 252 planes.

It has to be borne in mind that in 1914 the airplane played a minor role. Numerical advantage in this field during the first great battles in the west must, therefore, not be overestimated. France's predominance in the construction of submarines had, of course, no influence in these fights. Still, it is worthy of note and to a certain degree characteristic, that the first French submarine was launched as early as 1886, whilst the first German U-boat was constructed in 1906 — twenty years later! At the outbreak of war, the French had 40 and the British 26 submarines ready for use, and there were many others building. German naval men began to take a lukewarm interest in U-boats from 1904 onwards, but they considered this novel weapon as of no value so far as actual warfare was concerned. Gotheim writes: 'It was owing to constant pressure exercised by the Reichstag that Germany at the beginning of hostilities possessed even a few U-boats. Each U-boat had, as it were, to be wrestled for since Tirpitz was only impressed by dreadnoughts. The periscope had long since been invented, yet the admiral declared: "U-boats are problematical for no man can see under water".'

Rear-Admiral Calster was a warm supporter of the U-boat. He re-

signed his post on account of a difference of opinion in German naval policy. In 1907, he published a work on the *Sea Armament Necessary for Germany*. In this book he put his views to the proof. A group of German liberals to which Gotheim belonged was profoundly interested in Calster's ideas. In 1909, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, representing left-wing liberalism under the able editorship of Theodor Wolff, propagated Calster's and Captain Persius' notions. The movement acted like a spur to the construction of U-boats, but it did not succeed in giving a fresh orientation to German naval policy. Yet that was precisely the target aimed at. Rear-Admiral Michelsen, a supporter of Tirpitz' policy, is quite at sea when, in his book on U-boat warfare, he declares that the only aim of this group 'is to prevent the building of dreadnoughts and to curtail additional allowances to the navy'. The facts of the case were quite otherwise. The group possessed more imagination than Tirpitz and his colleagues. Also it wished that Germany should enter the campaign as well-equipped as possible. The parliamentarians wanted an Anglo-German agreement, because they realized what the coming war held in store. For this reason they backed Rear-Admiral Michelsen. It was not solely due to lack of technical knowledge that Tirpitz was only impressed by dreadnoughts; and the advocates of U-boat construction were, to a certain extent, aware of this. William II casually remarked to Persius: 'Such a box has just got to look powerful.' He was right, considering the function of the German navy at that time and reckoning with the fact that Herr von Tirpitz' 'risk idea' meant the sweeping from the sea of the whole German fleet were the policy not to succeed. U-boats were not impressive enough for such an enterprise, especially when compared with what Great Britain could put to sea. A man who contemplated a fight at sea with the British would be a fool to rely on the U-boat alone for obvious reasons and even were he to expect miracles to be wrought by the new weapon. Tirpitz was perfectly logical when he stuck to the battleship. But that does not alter the fact that the naval authorities failed to realize the importance of the U-boat and that at the outbreak of the war Germany was ill-provided with the new weapon.

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The army, which staked all on a swift decision, should have made efficient use of all available technical devices and of man-power. We have

already touched upon the reasons which limited the scope of the land forces. More might have been done to improve their quality. But the dread which filled the hearts of the feudalist ruling class led to its refusal to exploit in full measure the idea of universal military service. This dread was somewhat exaggerated. Still, we must not forget that the Germany of William II, in spite of anti-liberal and absolutist tendencies, was to a certain extent a liberal society wherein the bourgeois and socialist opposition could bring influence to bear on many aspects of life and this within the framework of legal freedoms. The process of converting the state and the nation to democracy constituted an acute danger to the adherents of the old order.

William II's words have to be interpreted in the light of the following principle: 'A recruit, if so ordered, must shoot even his father and mother.' Such a notion of discipline was not only politically, but also militarily, an anachronism in an era of mass-armies and mass-movements. It was the remnant of a more or less absolutist Germany and adhered to the Fatherland as powder to glue.

'To mention but one result of this feudalist mentality,' writes Demeter, 'I may refer to the brutal treatment meted out to soldiers, an aspect of disciplinary measures which roused so justified a feeling of resentment.' Major Wolkmann, who contributed to the 'Reichsarchiv', fully supported this view. In one of his publications, he is at no pains to disguise that through the sharp criticism of the social democrats such drastic military discipline 'softly and slowly vanished away into eternal rest'.

Liberals and social democrats fought these abuses, not only on political and humanitarian grounds, but likewise for reasons of national armament. Bebel's slogan: 'Neither a man nor a penny piece shall be contributed to maintain such a system', had nothing to do with pacifism or a neutral attitude towards the defence of the country, for, as a positive contribution to his slogan, he published a book entitled *No Standing Army, but a Militia*. Bebel wished that education for military service should start as soon as a boy was twelve years old. Nation and army were to become a democratic unity without class distinctions. As to the form of organization and the uses to which the army was to be put, none but the sovereign people should have any say. In an official party publication of 1910, we read: 'Although social democrats are opposed to militarism, they are certainly not inclined to render the people defenceless. He who

says so is a liar and a slanderer. We demand the highest degree of efficiency.'

The idea of 'the nation-in-arms' is, owing to its origin, a typically anti-feudalist, democratic, and socialist concept. Bebel in Germany and Jaurès in France fought consistently to carry it into effect. 'National defence', wrote Jaurès in his important work *The New Army*, 'is only possible on condition that the nation participates heart and soul.' Bebel and Jaurès were the representative spokesmen on military concepts whose validity was proved again and again during the World War. But both these leaders were at the same time champions of peace and they believed that only the democratic nation-in-arms ready for action at home as well as abroad could be a righteous nation. It is significant that Jaurès who wrote *The New Army* was one of the first whose life was sacrificed in 1914 in the struggle to preserve peace.

Bebel's militia could not be created within the framework of the existing political and social order. Yet the reforms which gave birth to a democratic militia often and simultaneously introduced new conditions in the sphere of politics and in the social order. But since full use of the national military power was so closely linked with the reconstruction of the army on democratic lines, the ruling classes looked upon it as a dangerous reform which would inevitably disrupt the old feudal state. Imperial Germany, therefore, dared not venture upon this path. The principles underlying such a step were very similar to those with which Old Prussia was faced in the Napoleonic epoch. Ziekursch among others pointed out this similarity. But whereas under Napoleon the problem was how to free the peasant and the citizen, the government of twentieth-century Germany was confronted with the problem of the political and social emancipation of the workers.

The industrial workers could not be persuaded into the belief that maltreatment of soldiers, the injunction to shoot on father and mother, and many another militarist exhortation, were necessary to the defence of the Fatherland. They knew instinctively, and a very large proportion knew from rational argument, that these methods were due to the contrast between the ruling class and the toiling masses. Naturally the reaction to these facts was often violent, and took the form of implacable opposition to all that concerned armaments and war. It may be asked whether this policy was justified and realistic. But this question does not concern

us here. From the sociological point of view, Karl Liebknecht was nothing better than a mirror of the military system, and it is far less surprising that a Liebknecht arose than that before the war, during the war, and for the short time after the war in which he survived assassination, only a very exiguous proportion of the German workers constituted a following. Had his outlook prevailed, an overwhelming majority of the German Labour Movement in 1914 and in later days would undoubtedly have behaved differently at the beginning of the war and during subsequent years. What happened in 1914 can only be understood if one bears in mind that the German Labour Movement opposed militarism as a whole, but was not theoretically against a defensive war which in 1914 was taken for granted and which the workers waged without any ambitious schemes of conquest. But of this, more anon.



We have seen that Marx and Engels viewed the Franco-Prussian war in a very matter-of-fact and sober way. As long as, in their estimation, the war against Napoleon III seemed to be a war of defence, they agreed that it was a just war — in spite of holding antagonistic ideas to those of Bismarck. But as soon as it obviously became a war of conquest, they changed their attitude for the same matter-of-fact and sober political reasons. They were convinced that France, robbed of important provinces, was about to embark on a policy of alliance with tsarist Russia. This was a sad perspective inasmuch as the reactionary empire of the tsar threatened to become Europe's arbitrator, an issue they wished to prevent at almost any cost.

Here we have to deal with a problem the importance of which for the neutrality of German social democracy before the World War and while it lasted can hardly be overestimated. If in 1891 war had broken out between Russia and France on the one side against Germany on the other, Friedrich Engels, in spite of his irreconcilable hostility towards the German military system and in spite of his conviction that in 1871 France had suffered a fatal injustice, would have supported the government of the First Reich — though he would have kept his independence of judgment. He was not interested in theoretical slogans; but bearing in mind the real situation, he approached the problems of war and armaments as circumstances prescribed.

On October 13th, 1891, Engels wrote to Bebel: 'If the peril of war increases, we must inform the government that we are prepared to support it against the foreign enemy — that is if we are given fair treatment and provided the war is waged with all available means, revolutionary means included. Should Germany be attacked simultaneously from the east and the west, every method of defence is fair play. Our national existence will be at stake no less than the maintenance of our position and the chances for the future for which we have fought.' Gustav Meyer, who wrote such an outstanding biography of Friedrich Engels, comments on these words in the second volume of his work which was published in 1934. He writes: 'This great German international socialist wished to meet the Imperial German government halfway. . . . To Engels, the "national existence" of the great civilized nations belonged — as has frequently been pointed out — to the "real values" which could not be contested from any angle from which they might be approached.'

Thus a war of conquest was according to this principle to be condemned, whilst a defensive war was considered a perfectly legitimate undertaking. All Engels' military and political ideas circle round the thorny problem of how a nation can be made extremely strong for the defence while a group of politicians aiming at conquest are to be prevented from misusing the strength of the nation by threatening the existence of other countries. Every social democrat was confronted by this same problem. Whether the German social democrats invariably proved themselves equal to tackling the task is a question which cannot be dwelt upon here. The task was an extremely delicate one. In smaller states, where certain guarantees are given against the misuse of the national will-to-defence, or in states where the army is not the playground of a reactionary class of society, the problem is far simpler to approach.



In Germany, as in other countries, there were many pacifists at that time. These men and women were pacifist on principle and for ideological reasons, regardless of the extant form of the military constitution. They earnestly believed that the new world they longed for, which would be a world knowing nothing of war or hatred, could only come into existence through wholehearted pacifism. Our civilization need have no shame of such ideals. But powers, whose victory the champions of a world without

hatred or war cannot desire, have profited by the pacifist outlook. This has been pregnantly brought home to us during the second World War.

Friedrich Engels' approach to the problems of war and military preparedness was extremely resilient. In 1891, in case war should break out on account of the Franco-Russian alliance, he saw himself in the role of a Gambetta. That is why he noted with concern the profound contrast which existed between the conservatism of the Prusso-German Officers' Corps and the headlong developments in the sphere of technical science. 'What we need are fresher and bolder minds, and I think I am not far wrong in believing that many such minds are to be found in Germany', wrote Engels. Bebel in those days complained to him: 'The more they see that they have been compelled to reduce the numbers of men serving in the army and the duration of military service, the more tenaciously will they cling to everything which may preserve the conservative tradition. We have on the one hand, a clear insight into the essential facts, whilst on the other we are up against the stupidest pre-Jena mentality which when things come to a head may break the neck of the whole system.' And he added resignedly: 'We can do nothing whatever about it except by education.' Even in his old age, Bebel wanted 'to shoulder a rifle' against the menace of a tsarist attack. The situation worried him considerably. Had Imperial Germany been able to act in accordance with Bebel's principles, as likely as not the miracle of the Marne in 1914 might not have been wrought. But in this case, Imperial Germany would not have been the country it actually was!



The contrast between the army policy of Imperial Germany and the demeanour of the delegates at the two peace conferences at The Hague in 1899 and 1907 was blatant. Such an attitude would have been inconceivable had not home policy taken precedence of every military consideration. At The Hague, all attempts of the assembled powers to obtain a cessation of the armament race were indignantly rejected by the German representatives as an attack on the honour and sovereignty of the German nation. The 'Reichsarchiv' emphasizes the fact that in Germany the armament question was to all intents and purposes a stalemate, 'which is as much as to say that the Russian proposals had to be accepted'. The 'Reichsarchiv' admits that Germany's rejection of the proposals made at

the two peace conferences at The Hague was the more unintelligible 'since all foreign countries suspected Germany's policy'. Far-reaching, indeed, were the consequences of this policy of keeping up prestige on the home front and abroad. The entire world was convinced henceforward that Germany intended to arm on a tremendous scale and desired war. The Anglo-Russian agreement, which the Germans had considered an impossibility, brought about the encirclement of the Central Powers as with an iron ring.

Leading militarists became increasingly pessimistic — as was manifest even after the first of The Hague conferences. Waldensee wrote in his 1903 diary: 'I have come to the conclusion that although I have for many reasons considered a war desirable, it now seems to me that it would be a most risky enterprise.' He died in March 1904 and one of the last sentences he jotted down was: 'Pray God that I have not to live through that which I see approaching.' Schlieffen, his successor to office, was likewise at times in pessimistic mood. The younger Moltke, too, who in 1906 was appointed Chief of General Staff, and under whose leadership the German army entered upon the first World War, saw everything before that date as dark and dreadful, while later on he saw not the faintest gleam of sunshine. 'How long will it be before the pillars of the proud edifice of the Reich, which it has taken years to build with blood and iron, are doomed to fall about our heads?' Thus he wrote to his wife in 1904. In August 1905 he again wrote to her that no sooner did he set to work than an inner voice seemed to whisper: 'Wherefore? All is in vain.' After 1907, he lapsed into a mood of complete hopelessness. Ludendorff and others inform us that their chief told them repeatedly and with tears in his eyes that 'everything is of no avail. We are going to lose the coming war after all'.



'A large pack of hounds means death to the hare', Moltke sententiously remarked. And Bethmann-Hollweg, who in 1909 became Chancellor, shared this opinion. He did his best to improve Anglo-German relations and inevitably became an opponent of Tirpitz and the latter's naval policy. Violent bickerings ensued during which, as Tirpitz wrote later, 'the army was used as a catapult against the navy'.

Without consulting his chief, Ludendorff, who at that time was a

member of the mobilization department of the General Staff, bombarded the War Ministry with new demands. Ludendorff realized that, to bring off Schlieffen's 'Cannae', the Germans had not a sufficiency of soldiers. Being a typical military man, he failed to grasp General Wandel's argument: 'If you persist in that direction, a revolution will break out in a few years.' Because he was utterly unable to understand this fact, Ludendorff was given a provincial post on January 27th, 1913. His superior officer there was requested 'to teach him discipline'.

All attempts to adjust the political structure and the method of government to the requirements of the modern industrial state were failures. Increasingly large sections of the middle class deemed that the only way to solve the problem in which Germany was involved was by working hand in hand with the social democrats. Favoured by an adequate election agreement, the social democrats entered the Reichstag in 1912 with 110 representatives. Impressed by this result, Heinrich Class, Councillor for Justice and since 1908 leader of the *Alldeutscher Verband*, wrote in his work *If I were the Kaiser*: 'He who loves his people and wishes to hasten the crisis of the present illness will long for the war as a remedy and as a means for the revival of all the good, healthy, strong energies of the people. Victory would, as in 1870-71, inflame national sentiment, and this coming hour should be exploited in such a manner as to deal the knock-out blow to liberalism and socialism and send to the devil both the Reichstag and democracy. Defeat, which would not frighten the brave of heart, would cause such chaos in Germany that the army, supported by the conservatives, would soon be in a position to set up a dictatorship.' He agreed with Treitschke, the famous German historian, that 'war in the critical phases of the nation's life is always a milder remedy than a revolution'. The fate of Napoleon III had proved the contrary, but there were many who said: 'Better an end bringing terror in its train than terror without end.' In *My Military Career*, Ludendorff comments: 'Those who coined this frivolous sentence seemed hopeful of reaping advantages and profit from a war and a victory of the army.'

The *Alldeutscher Verband*, working along similar lines of thought, demanded a robust national policy at home and abroad. By a vigorous policy at home they believed it possible to solve the problem of universal military service. Prominent personalities in the German army did not share this outlook. By such methods, they saw no successful solution.

## WAR BETWEEN CONTINENTS

The Alldeutscher Verband attacked the Minister of War, who wanted nothing better than to be left undisturbed. Those of the Verband who were in the army were officially reprimanded. Their remark that official Germany was 'war shy' did not lack foundation. Like many others, Bethmann-Hollweg knew the reasons for this 'war shyness'. On June 4th, 1914, he said: 'If the consequences of a World War are lost to view, the power of social democracy will be drastically enhanced because the Labour Movement preaches peace and will be in a position to send thrones crashing.' Barely were these words out of his mouth, when the terrible and world-wide conflagration broke loose.

## THE WORLD WAR OF 1914-1918

IN August 1914, Bethmann-Hollweg said: 'It will be a violent but short, exceedingly short, thunderstorm. I reckon on a three or at most a four months' campaign. I have based my whole policy on this.' Bülow, who reports this utterance in his memoirs, is not very trustworthy but it was almost universally held that by the autumn, 'when the leaves are falling', there would be peace.

At the outset, everything pointed to the war being a short one. Supported by an excellent network of railway communications, the German army was speedily mobilized and with the utmost precision the fighting took place on enemy soil. Thus France lost half of her coal resources, 83 per cent of her iron-ore production, and about 75 per cent of her pig-iron and steel. What Germany found ready to hand in Belgium was likewise fabulous. The taking over of such vast industrial resources, foreseen in Schlieffen's strategical plan, proved extremely important when that plan failed. France did not realize her loss any more than Germany realized what she had gained at the time, for in neither country was a lengthy war of raw materials contemplated.

During the delirium which preceded his death agony, Schlieffen is alleged to have said: 'Do everything to strengthen our right wing.' The whole movement depended upon its strength, for according to Schlieffen's plan the bulk of the German army was to sweep in a semi-circle to the left across Belgium and through France, beat the French, and press their army against the Swiss frontier. The tragedy of this strategist of genius was that the Reich, which he wished to serve faithfully, could not strengthen the right wing as he thought necessary for a successful 'Cannae' in France. Though the peace-time strength of the French army was superior to that of Germany, the latter's war-time army, owing to swifter methods of mobilization, was stronger than that of France. But — and this is what matters in this connection — it was not as strong as it should have been in Schlieffen's estimation, and as it ought to have been theoretically in view of Germany's population. On the western

front, Germany had remarkable successes to start with, but in the end the decisive factor was that her entire plan of operation failed, since she aimed at defeating France in the shortest possible time. Not to have achieved this goal was, in spite of initial tactical successes, a defeat. Whether her expected 'Cannae' would have been won had Germany utilized all her potentialities as the French did theirs, is not certain. But Germany — semi-absolutist power as she was — could not afford to do so. French armament was far from perfect but, measured by the objective potentialities of both countries, republican France had between 1871 and 1914 on the whole achieved more in this sphere than the Prusso-German military state. This consideration apart, it is difficult to understand why the 'Cannae' failed in 1914 and so brilliantly succeeded in 1940. The fact that in 1914 Germany had to face a war on two fronts explains much but not all.

As early as 1870, Friedrich Engels declared that France would face her erstwhile foe as a nation-in-arms. The official documents of the 'Reichsarchiv', on which our exposition is mainly based, prove that the Prusso-German military state could not win in the armament race with France owing to the political situation at home. This was all the more important for the war in the west since technical science in 1914 was not yet master on the battlefield and Germany did not possess in this domain the advantage which she had gained over France in civil life. Thus in 1914 numerical superiority counted to a far greater extent than in 1940. But Germany's numerical superiority was not sufficient for the realization of Schlieffen's great offensive plan.

Who can tell whether in the circumstances the initial German successes would have been possible had not the German domestic policy suddenly broken away from its original trend and, by making the workers believe in a war of defence at the eleventh hour and even only temporarily, filled the deep chasm between the people in general and the army? The attitude of the Labour Movement in the fight against tsarist Russia was of the utmost value. The German government knew very well what Russia's intervention in the war meant for the home front. When Albert Ballin, during the critical days of 1914, asked Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg why he was in such a hurry to wage war on Russia, the Chancellor answered significantly: 'I have to attack the Russian tsar otherwise I shall not get support from the social democrats. Has not their

God Almighty, August Bebel, the son of a Prussian sergeant from Dentz, publicly declared: "If there is going to be a war against the Russian tsar, then I, old as I am, shall shoulder a rifle": I know he means what he says, and all social democrats think as he does, thank God.' It is this to which — if we are to believe Tirpitz — he refers when he said: 'I need my declaration of war on Russia for political reasons at home.'

Russia was at that date not only economically, technically, culturally, politically, and socially behind the times but she was likewise incapable of emulating the west even in military respects. 'Contrary to the assumptions current among us, the civilized armies have proved their superior quality as against the barbarians and illiterates', wrote Max Weber in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (1915).

At the outset of the first World War, heavy industry in Germany and Russia respectively stood at a ratio of five to one. Though Russia possessed an enormous quantity of raw materials before the war, she had to import iron and steel, while during the conflict she came more and more to rely on Allied assistance. The lack of technical equipment in the Russian army was as great a hindrance to success in the field as the country's general backwardness. Germany, when compared with Russia, had ten times as much heavy artillery. Russian rail communications proved utterly inadequate. Chemical industry was still in the making. As early as the third month of the war, the Russian troops suffered from a dearth of artillery ammunition and later on from a lack of rifle ammunition. Towards the end, there were no rifles at all. In the summer of 1915, the Russians marked up merely one hundred shots to the German three thousand. This was a positive sign of Russia's backwardness, no less than the fact that the Russian army consisted mainly of illiterate and slow-witted peasants.

The front-line armies of the Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungary, etc.) numbered approximately 3,800,000 men; the Entente (France, Russia, Great Britain, Serbia, Montenegro) some 5,700,000. Schlieffen had thought to keep the Russians in check with relatively few troops until the issue had been decided in the west. But since the situation in the east was obviously deteriorating, troops were transferred from the west before the 'Cannae' had taken place. It is contended that this had dire effects — so much so that the rapid advance was checked and brought to a standstill on the Marne.

Since the French could not discern the sudden turn of events between September 5th and 9th, they speak of the 'miracle of the Marne'. Should the opinion of the predominant majority of military experts prove correct, then, owing to its weakness, the German army was compelled to come to a standstill and the 'miracle of the Marne' in the last resort was nothing other than the triumph of democracy over semi-absolutism. Because of her sociological development, France had 12.6 per cent of her population thoroughly well trained from the military point of view, whereas Germany had only 7.5 per cent. Again, in Germany every eighty-fifth man was a soldier; in France on the other hand every fiftieth man was trained to arms.

After the war, many people in Germany held that if this or that mistake had not been made, Schlieffen's plan, even with a paucity of troops, might have succeeded. Others maintained that, owing to the war technique of those days, a stalemate would have been reached anyhow. But let us assume that the German operational plans had fully succeeded, what then? Some declared that it would have meant a German victory. Others that a German victory could not be counted upon with any certainty. A third group, whose leader was Professor Delbrück and to which Professors Hobohm, Ziekwach, and Major Boekke belonged, considered the question from a totally different angle. The champions of this tendency were of opinion that even if the Germans had been capable of defeating both Russia and France the war would not have been ended — far less won — since the most important power of the Entente was Great Britain, against whom the achievement of a 'Cannae' was not possible.

Great Britain's attitude at the outset was vacillating. There was a strong tendency against the war which made itself felt through opposition inside the government. But the invasion of Belgium changed this attitude completely. A repetition of Pitt's dilemma occurred. General Kuhl states that the General Staff clearly foresaw that a violation of Belgian neutrality was a dubious move but that the march through Belgium was considered strategically essential. To be in a position to wage a war on two fronts there was no alternative but first to destroy French resistance — the strongest and most dangerous opponent — and then to face the east. The reverse was out of the question, for then the tsarist armies would have availed themselves of the possibility to withdraw into the interior of Russia in order to avoid a decision.

Seen from the strategical point of view of the continent, this surmise is correct. But when Germany, to gain a swift decision in the west, invaded Belgium and the British Empire entered the war, the continental war changed into a World War in which no swift decision could be reached even though a 'Cannae' in France should have proved successful. Schlieffen's plan was thus self-contradictory. The decisive problem was, therefore, not that in 1914 Germany was numerically inferior, but that she was constrained to violate Belgian neutrality. Ziekursch wrote later on: 'He who in spite of all political objections held fast to Schlieffen's plan of operations because only by carrying them out to the letter could Germany's economic situation be saved should have borne in mind that any military move, even were it considered to be of the utmost value so far as the continent was concerned, was a blunder if it paved the way for the British government to prevail upon the island people to collaborate in the war against Germany. Great Britain's power, her financial position, above all her navy with its supremacy at sea and control of world trade, would prove more and more effective the longer the war dragged on. When the United Kingdom decided to intervene, a short war was no longer possible. Even the annihilation of the French army within two months would not have broken the resistance of the island realm. Napoleon's victories over the allies on the continent failed to subdue Great Britain.

\* 'The strength of the foe', writes Boelcke, 'lay in the fact that he had control of world trade, that is to say he possessed the unrestricted use of inexhaustible human and material resources. The time factor sucked us dry, and the British knew of course that time was on their side. Accustomed as they were to thinking on the grand scale, they discovered practical methods for getting out of their difficulties, despite many twistings and much uphill work. How could anyone in his senses expect such brains as these to become confused about alleged Schlieffen "Cannae's"? No, the British, even after a 'Cannae' in France, 'would have continued the fight in spite of the possibility of having to transfer the seat of government from London to Montreal or Kapstadt', so Major Boelcke assures us. 'A Napoleon', he continues, 'whose power and independence in the matter of supplies from overseas was very much greater than those of the Central Powers in 1914-18, died as an ill-treated prisoner on an island belonging to Britain. Yet you would have us believe that a war on the

continent lost from the outset and dragging on for years would mean capitulation on the part of Great Britain? Neither would the Americans have accepted a "Cannae" suffered by France as a divine judgment. There can be no doubt that from the very start they were in sympathy with the Entente. Had events been speeded up through a great victory in France, this would only have meant that American intervention would not have hung fire so long and that the United States would have joined German's enemies at once.' Boelcke proved that 'the effects of Schlieffen's "Cannae" would have been disappointing'. Delbrück's arguments run on similar lines, but they will be discussed later. Here we need but mention that he maintained there would be trench warfare on the Channel coasts and, considering the standard of war technique, such trench warfare was likely to start much earlier somewhere in France.

Moltke, Caprivi, Bloch, and others were right. The strategy of annihilation encountered on the continent insuperable obstacles. The mass-armies dug themselves in and what had started as a war of movement changed into a static war and a war, of materials. When Germany capitulated, the battle of the Marne became the chief subject of discussions on the war. But so long as the war lasted, the German people did not know that the whole German plan of campaign had been frustrated, nor could they realize what such a disaster implied.

When the critical moment arrived, the senior officers are supposed to have claimed that the best way out was to conclude peace immediately. But on account of the first great successes, wide circles in Germany were so optimistic that they were convinced Great Britain would soon be dealt the knock-out blow. One of the few sober-minded individuals who held contrary views was Albert Ballin, general director of the Hamburg-American Line. He thought in terms of world economy and world policy. Writing to Tirpitz on October 1st, 1914, he declared:

'I was in Berlin this week and am worried about the scatter-brained outlook, not merely of the people of Berlin, but also of prominent gentlemen from the Rhineland and Westphalia. A landing of our troops in England is for them already an accomplished fact; the seizure of the most profitable colonies needs no further discussion, so they think. That we keep Calais, Boulogne, and Ostend is a foregone conclusion. The British navy has to become proportionate to our own. The war indemnity fluctuates between thirty and forty milliards. That the British navy has

withdrawn from Channel waters to seek shelter in the lee of the Orkneys is as certain as that Egypt belongs to those colonies which are to be served up to us as dessert.'

By word and picture, the German newspapers bolstered up these naive fictions especially in regard to the landing of German troops on English soil. In the summer of 1911, Hermann Löns dreamed his dreams on the strand of the Baltic Sea, went for long rambles among the sand dunes, chatted with the old salts, and made pleasure trips in a sailing craft. As may readily be imagined, he was overcome by the romantic life of the seafarer and he wrote a poem about 'we sail against England'. This effusion was temporarily very popular in Germany, found a composer to set it to music, and was sung during the first World War. But this 'sailing against England' was never taken literally by leading army and navy men. They considered invasion impossible. General Kuhl, in his work on the World War, thinks it a trifle strange that even in 1917 and 1918 Great Britain retained her fear of a German invasion and kept a strong territorial force to safeguard the country. The general says: 'It is rather difficult to explain this apprehension, for in the absence of command of the seas, not only during the landing of the army but also to protect it while in occupation, such an enterprise would have been impossible for Germany to carry into execution. Had Germany been able to secure command of the seas, then an invasion would not have been necessary for the subjugation of England.'

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While discussing the problems of invasion under Napoleon, we saw that Meurer held identical views. It is interesting to note that Rear-Admiral Groos, in the early days of June 1940, reminded his readers in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* that a German landing in England could only have been contemplated after an outstanding victory over the far superior might of the British navy. But this expert's knowledge is not universally recognized, nor was it shared by the country with 'the best army in the world'. At the time of the Boer War, the newspaper issued by the *Alldeutscher Verband* reported: 'A small German contingent would suffice to shut up for good and all the heroes across the Channel, for the handful of English students are flamboyant Punches who cannot deal a punch.'

A German diplomat tells us that General von Plessen, Adjutant to William II, said in those days that one division successfully landed on English soil would finish off that country. He deemed the British to be totally lacking in the martial virtues and made poor soldiers. Among these groups of pre-war Germany, this amounted to an axiom. The World War shattered the concept. Tirpitz, in his *Memoirs*, regards the under-estimation of the British army as a huge blunder. The following interchange on the subject is interesting. Tirpitz: 'When after the outbreak of war, I warned the Chief of General Staff not to estimate too lightly the power of this insignificant band which, so to speak, consisted merely of sergeants, the Chief answered: "We are arresting them".' He was not referring to the British territorial army at home but to the expeditionary force operating in the west.

So far as armaments were concerned, Great Britain entered the first World War if possible even less well prepared than for the second. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, recalling the earlier war, wrote in February 1939 that Lord Kitchener, the newly appointed Secretary of War, when on August 6th, 1914, he was about to sign the first document of his term of office, he noticed that the nib of the pen lying on the writing-table of the Ministry was corroded with rust. Kitchener, who was one of the few to recognize at the very beginning of the conflict that it was likely to last a long time, took this as a symbol of Great Britain's position when she embarked upon the enterprise. That the war could not be fought with immense naval and financial power alone, but required an ever-increasing land-army as well, was recognized by Kitchener from the outset. It is quite understandable that the island population should deem a land-army of secondary importance. For, so they argued, if the navy could hold its own, the country — should it become necessary — would have time to muster a larger and stronger army. This interdependence was not always understood and, consequently, misled by the numerical inferiority of the British army, people were apt to come to the false conclusion that across the Channel the warrior breed had died out and that the conditions for creating a mass-army were non-existent. The Prusso-German military state was taken completely by surprise when one million British subjects volunteered as soldiers and proved hardy and tenacious fighters. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler sharply attacks Imperial Germany 'for her stupid mockery of the English which was bound to lead to one of the worst

self-delusions ever experienced. I remember', he continues, 'very precisely the amazement depicted on the faces of my comrades when we came into personal contact with the Tommies in Flanders'.

Indeed, the British administered some hefty blows — though relatively late in the conflict. This is due to the fact that an improvised army has to grow up to its task. Great Britain never felt the absolute need to win a swift victory. A general wishes to try conclusions with the enemy as soon as possible, but so far as Great Britain is concerned it suffices to hinder the foe from achieving a quick victory. The navy was relied on to bring this about; its other and greater duty was to protect the British Isles from invasion. But just as in 1940, so in 1914 the danger of invasion on account of Germany's rapid advance arose more quickly than was expected in spite of the island realm being protected by the sea and the navy. In both instances, the British Isles were insufficiently guarded against this peril. Now, although in 1914 Germany possessed a battle fleet in the proportion of two to three, yet the thought of invasion was not contemplated. France had not been conquered and the German army was therefore pinned down, if not in the west at least in the east. At that time Germany commanded only the coasts of Flanders and aircraft still played a relatively insignificant part — though the Entente had supremacy in this field throughout the World War. Despite these facts, it is truly remarkable that after 1918, when German strategy during the World War was being so passionately discussed, nobody seemed to consider it had been a mistake not to undertake an invasion of England and gain naval supremacy. In the military literature which was published after the outbreak of the second World War, nobody has maintained that the conquest of Great Britain might have been possible or might have been made possible by an adequate use of technical improvements introduced into warfare and especially by the use of aircraft. Captain Schultz is of opinion that 'the nervous and frequently incomprehensible anxiety of Great Britain about invasion and menace from abroad could have been systematically exploited, thus playing directly into the hands of the German High Command'. British naval and military forces would thus have been pinned down, other theatres of war would have been relieved of the strain, and perhaps political successes might even have been achieved.

Such tactics may have been considered to cut both ways, since they

might react on those who used them. For if invasion scares are constantly being spread abroad and among the attacking party and yet no invasion follows, people are prone to say: 'They are not strong enough to make the attempt and, in the circumstances, our own force is liable to be weakened and that of the enemy to be strengthened.'



The German government had, prior to the war, to make their calculations on the probability of Great Britain's intervention. Since an invasion of the British Isles was *a priori* out of the question, it was necessary to seek out methods that would put a spoke in the British wheel. Not everyone was convinced that the 'Cannae' in France would solve this problem. William II wrote on July 30th, 1914, two days before the German mobilization, one of his customary marginal notes in which he declared that Germany would 'collapse and bleed to death'. In 1898, while in Damascus, he had solemnly vowed that he was the close friend of the three hundred million Mahomedans. By this declaration he fancied he could strengthen Germany's predominance in the Moslem world and thus, when the time came, he would put Britain's nose out of joint in her relations with her Mahomedan subjects. He sought, moreover, if not to conquer, at least to take vengeance on the British Empire. 'Our consuls, agents, etc., in Turkey and India must make every endeavour to incite the whole Mahomedan world to revolt against this hated, mendacious, unscrupulous nation of shopkeepers. If we are fated to bleed to death, Great Britain will at least be deprived of India,' he wrote on June 30th, 1914. Von Moltke was at the time his Chief of General Staff and shared his Imperial master's views. Any means which could outwit the enemy must be utilized. The emperor pretended to know that the American man in the street was well disposed towards Germany and he wished, with the aid of influential persons in the various German groups living in the United States, to exploit this alleged sympathy to the full. He thought it possible 'to rouse the United States to join battle on the high seas against the British with the incorporation of Canada as the reward of victory', so he writes in his characteristic style. When his notions proved to be a gigantic mistake, since they completely ignored the mentality and disposition of the American people, he tried to incite Mexico into an embroglio with the United States, thinking

thus to hamper America's movements when she entered the war against Germany. As a matter of historical fact, precisely the opposite occurred.

Moltke held an insurrection in India and Egypt to be of the utmost importance. 'By our treaty with Turkey', he wrote, 'the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will be able to turn the idea into a reality and arouse the fanaticism of Islam.' Turkey's attitude of neutrality at the outset of hostilities and her entry into the war on the side of the Central Powers was, indeed, of very great value in Germany's fight with Great Britain. The pretext was a 'holy war' against the Christian empire which would open the way to the east and Asia. Also Russia would be cut off from supplies sent by the Entente. This latter fact was largely instrumental in bringing about the collapse of the tsarist empire, since its home armament industry was very inefficient and it depended on the Allies for replenishments. Churchill, who was First Lord of the Admiralty, showed his perspicacity by his advocacy of a campaign to open the Dardanelles, thus placing the Straits under the control of the Entente so as to provide a route whereby Russia could be provisioned. Like so many another lost battle, his experiment was open to argument, but the Germans declare that it would have succeeded if the British had acted with greater energy and determination. During the period of vacillation, the Germans were given time to strengthen the fortifications and in this way the scheme broke down with great loss to the Allies. This attempt at effecting a landing during the last World War was on a big scale and ought to have been crowned with success. But it tends to show that a well defended coastline can hold its own even when faced by a superior force at sea. Before ever the attempt was made, however, the Germans fully realized this fact. And that is why an invasion of England was never embarked upon. Precisely on this account, Napoleon's plans concerning Egypt were revived by the German High Command. The Suez Canal made the route to India considerably shorter, thus enhancing the value of the territory in its vicinity. But the importance of the region was grossly exaggerated in Germany.

In 1913, General Liman von Sanders was appointed head of the German military mission to Turkey. In his book, *Five Years in Turkey*, he tells his readers that already in the last fortnight of August 1914 both German and Turkish generals were seriously considering an attack on the Suez Canal should Turkey enter the war. The representatives of the German

navy were strongly in favour of such a line of action. But Liman von Sanders had many criticisms to make against it. He writes:

'My outlook was shared by nobody. Everyone else was of opinion that the sooner an attack on Egypt was made the better. Even at that date, I could not see how, with the limited Turkish forces at our disposal and the shocking conditions of communications, we could possibly set about such a venture as the conquest of Egypt. Since Great Britain held complete command of the sea, she could speedily summon troops from India, the Commonwealth, and even from the motherland. From a strategical point of view, Britain was thoroughly well equipped with the most up-to-date war material for the defence of the Canal. Also she was provided with a copious supply of rolling-stock wherewith to direct the troops by rail to the various sensitive spots. The flat desert land was dominated by the long-range guns at the Canal and with cannon of powerful calibre installed on her battleships. To my way of thinking our people at home have a very muddle-headed idea as to the possibilities of a conquest of Egypt. A lot of balderdash has been talked about this so-called "weak spot" in British defences.'

But when a decision in the west had failed to mature and the expected conquest of France was not within sight, people began to ask themselves what was the next thing to be done. There was no time to be lost, for as was well known, time was on the Allies' side. Exactly four years before the German revolution, Churchill declared on November 9th, 1914, that the economic strangulation brought about by the blockade would need time to become truly effective. We are watching it now in the third month of the war, he said. Be patient now and see what will happen in the sixth, ninth, and twelfth month of the conflict. Only gradually and stealthily can success be achieved, but this success will spell the ruin of Germany as certainly as that the leaves will fall from the trees when winter comes.

The Germans considered this an illusion, but army and naval circles were better advised and were fully aware that Great Britain had the longer wind. Moltke, who in the meantime had been replaced by Falkenhayn, wrote to the Kaiser on January 15th, 1915, that Napoleon's idea of attacking England's weak spot, Egypt, should be revived. He went on to prove that Great Britain would, if necessary, continue to fight a lone hand if by diplomatic or military means 'the European sword could be

wrenched from her hand'. He continued: 'Since even with the aid of our fleet we cannot reach a decisive victory over Great Britain, we had far better revert to Napoleon's action.' Moltke believed that indirect action against England via Egypt had broken down in Napoleon's day merely on account of a lack of railway communications. But since this important adjunct to waging war had now been installed (the Berlin to Constantinople railway) and was capable of extension, action was indicated.



In November 1914, Turkey joined forces with the Central Powers. Germany endeavoured to induce Persia and Afghanistan to follow suit. Under the camouflage of setting up consulates, German commanders were sent to man the more important towns and bases in Persia. These men were to prepare Persia for the infiltration of German troops. With the same end in view an expedition was dispatched to Afghanistan under the leadership of Major Niedermayer and Secretary of Legation von Hentig. They went to see the Emir at Kabul, and both leaders have described their adventures and the intolerable difficulties they encountered. They imply that an expedition like that of Alexander the Great would not only be immensely arduous but probably impossible to organize.

In December 1914, Enver Pasha who was Chief of the Turkish General Staff gave expression to what Liman von Sanders describes as 'totally fantastic but remarkable views. He told me that he intended later on to march across Afghanistan to India'. But, following the example of Alexander the Great, Enver Pasha first endeavoured to march his armies into Egypt. The only difference was that he failed in his object and never set out for India. In modern times such an expedition was not so easy an undertaking. Alexander the Great conquered Egypt without having to put up a fight. Napoleon found his invasion more difficult. But in spite of railway development, his Turko-German and subsequently his Italo-German successors have found the taking of Egypt an extremely difficult operation.

In the second half of February 1915, the Turkish army, to the number of sixteen thousand men, started out for the attack on the Suez Canal. They were accompanied by a group of German officers, headed by Major Kress von Kressenstein, who shortly before the present war wrote a book dealing with this campaign. At that time, Palestine belonged to Turkey,

so the distance to Egypt was not a long one. Still, an arid desert approximately a hundred and twenty-five miles across had to be negotiated. The British were well aware of the advance of the Turkish troops and, though they knew the number of men, the English officers calmly continued to play football, Liman von Sanders informs us. By the time the Turkish army and their German comrades reached the Canal on February 2nd, 1915, they were worn out. Two days later, in an even more exhausted condition, they beat a retreat. It had become obvious that nothing could be done against England from that quarter. So what next?



After the battle of the Marne, Hindenburg said: 'Schlieffen's plan is a burst bubble. Now our young folk will have to cudgel their brains on their own account.' Not only was Schlieffen's plan out of date, but the whole of the system of armamentation was likewise. Thus the 'young folk' were faced with a tremendous task. Some time before the war Walther Rathenau had time and again pointed out that mechanized warfare would inevitably involve economic warfare besides. Few heeded him, and fewer still endeavoured to assimilate such thoughts. But even Rathenau was unable to foresee what it would be necessary to undertake in 1914. A considerable number of military experts were incapable of appreciating the issue in August 1914, nor did they understand what Rathenau was driving at when he urged the immediate need for the organization of the raw materials of war. No better understanding of this problem was reached after the battle of the Marne. As the war lingered on, people did come to realize its significance, for increasingly large amounts of material and ammunition had to be thrown into the battle. Had there been someone in Germany to warn the victors of 1870-71 that in one single month the infantry alone would use ten times as many cartridges as in the course of the six hundred engagements of the earlier campaign, he would simply not have been believed. The quick-firing rifle meant that these modern weapons were soon worn out. It was not through enemy action that the majority of German guns were lost, but 'by our own firing', says Ludendorff. Thus the reserves stowed away in arsenals and warehouses were soon exhausted and every country was faced with an armament shortage. In the first weeks of the war, the old

system of armament economy founded on 'stock reserves' broke down altogether.

Dr. Ferdinand Friedensburg writes in one of his publications: 'Had not such scholars and industrial magnates as Oswald, Haber, Bosch, Frank, and Caro insisted before the war on the synthetic production on a large scale of nitrogen, and had not Rathenau in August 1914 succeeded in interesting Falkenhayn in the management of raw materials, the collapse of the Central Powers was a foregone conclusion within a very few months of the outbreak of war — merely through lack of ammunition.'

All these men, whether scholars of repute or industrialists, were in one way or the other connected with those branches of industry which had acquired great renown throughout the world markets. They represented all that was most progressive in the spheres of economy, politics, and social life in Germany. Before the first World War, the chemical industry alone exported 85 per cent of its production and was, in addition to the electrical industry in which the Rathenau family played so large a part, the strongest asset which Germany possessed in her export trade. Professor Duisberg confesses that he and his colleagues in the chemical industry could not share the universal enthusiasm of the Germans in August 1914. So 'depressed with doubts we stood aside'. True, the chemical industry was highly developed, but it could not make the enormous strides expected of it owing to Germany's poverty in colonial possessions, and was thus hampered by a lack of raw materials. Nevertheless, this industry was instrumental in seeing the Germans through over so long a period. The magnates of the chemical industry never tired of reminding the powers that 'its high productive capacity can only be maintained on the basis of intensive participation in world trade'. When war came, synthetic rubber as well as synthetic nitrogen were being produced. These inventions, being unremunerative, were not put to the best and most advantageous uses. Before Napoleon's wars and his introduction of the continental system in the economic field, the substitute of beet sugar to replace cane sugar from the colonies had already been invented. In either case, the blockade rendered the use of substitutes essential. The substitute often proved to be as good if not better than the original product. Many substitutes, however, did not come up to standard, though the propagandists would have us believe that they were not merely of some value but equal to the original products. Strange to

say, these disappeared from the market as soon as the war was over. In the absence of certain raw materials, substitutes are not procurable. These raw materials have to be snatched away from other uses and even then they cannot be produced if material from abroad is lacking. For these and other reasons, the splendid German chemical industry met with insuperable difficulties. In spite of all its tribulations, it remains an admirable token of German inventiveness. This industry, being senior to any others in Germany, realized the limitations of German economic power and the urgent need for a negotiated peace.

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Already before the war started, civilians of note were urging the establishment of an economic General Staff. But in the first place, the military General Staff did not think such an organization necessary, and secondly it was not considered desirable that civilian forces should have a decisive say in the matter of armaments. In his own good time, Professor Haber told the officers of the Reichswehr, half reproachfully and half triumphantly, that 'in August and September 1914, civilians who were quite unaccustomed to the work had to be employed in the War Office because the need was so great. This step broke away from tradition, but it was no less urgent and important before the war'. Rathenau explicitly points out that everything had to be worked out and improvised by civilians regardless of the government and that the work stood the test. Goebel points out quite justifiably in his work on *Raw Materials in Relation to German Economy during the World War* that the department for war-time raw materials created by Rathenau was a 'branch grafted on to the many-branched tree of the War Office'. And he further exclaims: 'An industrialist, and a Jew at that, was head of department in one of the most conservative of all our institutions!' The situation was, indeed, a strangely fantastic one and many were the Germans who never reconciled themselves to the innovation. Even less could they understand that the *London Times* should mention this Jewish industrialist as one of the great strategists of the war on account of his superb achievements in this special sphere of activity.

Every country engaged in the war had the same problem to face, i.e. how to transform peace-time production into war production. But the solution was particularly hard for the blockaded Central Powers.

Germany's dilemma was that while it was essential to industrialize the country this could not be done effectively because of the blockade and yet the needs of warfare required precisely such industrialization. Another complication was that in 1914 Germany was deeply involved in world trade so that foreign dividends and debts were a substantial asset. This, together with the stores of raw material Germany had accumulated before the war, not to mention the reserves of food, contributed in large measure to her being able to hold out for so long a time. The population would not have been in a position to sacrifice its gold, its silver, and its copper had not a prosperous period preceded the war when the people were buying luxury articles and utensils made of these valuable materials. Many an article made for peace-time purposes was turned suddenly into war potentials. For instance, boots and shoes, which normally filled the shop windows or were in the home during the flourishing epoch of peace, became of immense value to the war economy. The 'Reichsarchiv', commenting on this state of affairs, writes: 'Nobody could be expected to realize these facts had it not been for the experiences suffered during the war. Good economic conditions during peace-time are the best guarantee for the tasks to be undertaken by the body politic during war.'



Though such things had been well organized, it was recognized that the preparations made for a war-time agricultural policy were very deficient. Though agriculture, owing to technical and chemical development, had steadily improved, Germany was not a self-supporting community. Again, Caprivi proved to have been in the right. By the irony of fate, the war broke out just as the protective barriers were being pulled down. Yet these barriers had allegedly been erected precisely for war-time emergencies. Now, when the blockade threatened, the import duties on grain of all sorts, on fodder, cattle, meat, lard, eggs, butter, cheese, flour, etc., were lifted. 'The people had always been led to suppose that Germany was well supplied in all these respects. Now, when the truth came to light, they were disillusioned.' So wrote Moltke to Ludendorff on January 29th, 1915. According to the 'Reichsarchiv', the conservative Ministry of the Interior invariably stressed the fact 'that the development of our grain production will make us more and more independent of foreign markets.'

It is quite possible for us to raise a sufficient crop of corn to meet our needs. The potato crop has increased, home-bred cattle are entirely adequate to feed our people with the necessary meat, etc.' But the Ministry obviously overlooked the fact that 'Germany depended on exports of fodder such as barley and other items, so that the meat and fat production depended mainly upon these imports,' continues the 'Reichsarchiv'.

Just as in blockaded Denmark to-day there is a shortage of meat through the wholesale slaughter of bullocks and pigs, so in 1915 Germany, too, had to use the same methods to satisfy the hunger of her people on the home front. But while any layman can understand the reasons for such measures, and although Moltke gave the initial impetus for such measures, they were later to be attributed to the baleful influence of the Jews, 'the fateful would-be conquerors of the world', as Darré, Minister of Food, wrote in 1937 in a work entitled *The Slaughter of Pigs*, which is highly characteristic of this attitude of mind. Professor Sering, an agricultural specialist, considers that had Moltke not made his decision when he did 'Germany would have reached famine level during the first year of the war'. According to Skälweit it was essential to reassure the public on this point in spite of the fact that the department of food well knew that it had not the means wherewith to supply the population with its most essential needs. Owing to the enormous accumulation of reserves in the warehouses and big grocery establishments in Germany — certainly not a country that lives from hand to mouth — 'the shops were abundantly stocked until well into 1916'. The general standard of life in Germany had steadily risen during the decades preceding the war so that when the scarcity period arrived the population was a relatively well-fed people who had to tighten their belts. So we must not underestimate the value of the huge accumulation of reserves upon which the German people could draw.

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The war plans of Great Britain were based on Germany's manifold commitments and her dependence on world trade — just as during the American War of Secession the North brought pressure to bear on the South by blockading the commercial ports of the latter. The British navy lent itself wholeheartedly to the task of bottling up all trade with the Central Powers. The reader will remember that when Ballin wrote to Tirpitz he assured the latter that the British fleet had fled into security

behind the Orkneys 'out of fear of the German fleet'. A belief was current that command of the seas by British ships no longer existed otherwise the fleet would engage the German enemy. Gradually it dawned upon the Germans that what the British were doing was proving highly effective. This was called 'the distant blockade'.

To the German Admiralty this 'distant blockade' came as a complete surprise. They had drawn up their plans on the assumption that if a naval engagement were to occur, the British would see to it that the encounter took place in the North Sea as close to the German coasts as possible. In these waters, so reckoned the German naval experts, a decisive battle would take place which would determine who was to be master of the North Sea. Everything — the construction of battleships, the radius of their operations, their speed, the training of the crews, manœuvres, etc. — all were based on this assumption. As late as May 1914, Scheer declared that 'British prestige could allow of no other action'. And in the Naval archives dealing with war at sea we can read: 'Provided the actual method of warfare corresponds to these expectations, we have a good chance of success.' Unfortunately for the Germans, the British did not react as they were expected to do in accordance with Clausewitz' principles and failed to engage the enemy's fleet in German waters, that is to say in the Heligoland Bight.

Besides, what reason was there for the British fleet to attack the enemy in waters of his own choice? So long as the German fleet was locked up in the Heligoland Bight, British sea supremacy was unassailable, for sea supremacy connotes control of sea communications, the arteries of the world, the blood circulation of world trade. Had Great Britain before 1914 exercised control over the North and Baltic Seas — which are contiguous if not actually part of the Atlantic Ocean — there might have been some sense in a naval engagement from the British side. But such action was prevented by the presence of the German navy, so that the latter was not so useless a weapon as it is sometimes estimated to have been. It effectively blocked the way to Russia by the North Sea and the Baltic — and this was no small achievement since the Dardanelles were similarly closed. Thus Germany was able to safeguard her trade with the Scandinavian countries, which (at least up to 1916) caused a considerable leakage in the blockaded area. As will be seen later, though this was of considerable advantage to Germany at the time, it was not of decisive importance since

the loss of Atlantic communications could never be made good. This ocean was of vital necessity to every European country, and the power that had supremacy over it had the upper hand. Great Britain, with her favourable geographical position in regard to Germany, found it comparatively easy to bar the passage of craft between Scotland and Norway and to close the Channel at the place where it joins the North Sea. Now it was precisely at this juncture, when Britain held the trump cards, that the German fleet should have attacked. Tirpitz' fleet, his 'risk fleet' as he named it, was not prepared for such action, as we have seen above. On August 22nd, 1914, Tirpitz wrote to his wife: 'It seems to me a strange anomaly that when we have the Baltic and the North Sea to range at will, we should be anchored tightly to our positions.' Thus British sea strategy accommodated itself excellently to the needs of modern warfare. Also the economic development of Germany, which during the decades of peace had given the British many a headache, proved an asset to the island realm when war came and gave scope for the use of the traditional weapon of the blockade on a scale unprecedented in the annals of the European continent. The German navy which should have safeguarded German trade and her colonies was entirely unequal to the task.

In an issue of *Simplicissimus* in 1915 there appeared a cartoon which was meant to symbolize the end of British sea supremacy by the use of the Zeppelin. It depicted Zeppelins crossing over London, flying low over the Nelson column, with the English hero making a hurried descent from his perch and seeking refuge in the Underground. It would have gladdened Tirpitz' heart considerably had the cartoonist proved to be correct. Though Falkenhayn had put his faith in the Zeppelin, this weapon did not stand the test when opposed by airplanes. In 1917, the Germans stopped Zeppelin attacks after a particularly costly flight. The Zeppelin attacks on London were not wholly without effect, for they helped to rouse the British will to resist.

Tirpitz, seeing that nothing could be done against Great Britain with his battleships, and feeling disappointed in the efficacy of both the Zeppelins and the airplane, then pinned his faith to the U-boat. In 1914, when Germany let slip the dogs of war, she possessed twenty-one U-boats, the majority of which for technical reasons were only relatively serviceable for warfare. The advantages accruing to the Entente were great. How many U-boats would Germany have had in 1914 had the

High Command been able to foresee the length of the war, British sea strategy, the trade war, and, above all, the supremacy of the U-boat in the war for keeping the trade routes open? To give the German authorities their due, we have to admit that in 1914 before war had been declared, the U-boat as a weapon had been considered as a possibly decisive factor. Yet the article dealing with this issue appeared in an English publication and not in a German one. It probed modern naval strategy and invited Germany, who was impotent in other ways at sea, to realize the value of the submarine. Only as the British blockade was tightened up was the idea of the use of the U-boat developed.

But this new weapon was two-edged. Its character did not conform to international agreements. In order to use it successfully, many things had to be ignored, such as navigation in neutral waters and so forth. Every vessel sailing in what Germany decreed to be 'a blockaded zone' was to be indiscriminately torpedoed. The United States protested repeatedly, especially after the *Lusitania* was sunk on May 7th, 1915, with one hundred American passengers aboard.

The United States wished to keep out of the war, but sympathy with the Allied cause grew from day to day. This sympathetic attitude was most apparent in relation to Great Britain because of the close bond of mutual interests and a common language and culture. The violation of Belgian territory also had pernicious consequences on the minds of American citizens against Germany. Although the United States wished to keep the peace, they were far from desiring a German victory with peace terms dictated by Germany. Apart from the fact that German militarism was repugnant to the American mind, public opinion was outraged by the activities of certain Germans who had settled in the United States and more especially by the kind of warfare carried on by the U-boats. The indignation aroused by the sinking of the *Lusitania* was universal and was so violent that, even now, Germany has never fully realized how strongly public opinion turned against her as a result of this incident. This is the reasoned opinion of Count Bernstorff who was German ambassador to the United States at the time. His Memoirs were published in 1920. Three weeks were to pass before the tension between the United States and Germany could be eased and diplomatic relations be decorously renewed. Ziekutsch declares that the *Lusitania* incident totally changed the political war waged by Great Britain against Germany so that

it became a national war. In addition, it showed the Americans that 'by waging such an indiscriminate war, Germany might set herself up to become master in Europe'. Many Americans urged the government to join the Entente without delay. It would have been easy for President Wilson to encourage this spirit and to exploit it, but he still hoped that peace would be restored in accordance with his ideals. Thus from the outset the U-boat campaign was menaced by the risk of embroiling the United States with Germany. There then came into being in the German government certain groups who wished to impose restrictions on U-boat warfare. For a time and partially, these groups succeeded in their demands. For this reason until February 1917 U-boat warfare was waged in a patchy and inconsistent manner.



In May 1915 the Central Powers received an unexpected blow from Italy who had for many years been an ally. In August 1914 Italy had declared herself a neutral. This came as a surprise, but her declaration of war on the Central Powers and her joining forces with the Entente in 1915 was an even greater one. In the Triple Alliance there was a secret clause known only to a few high officials in Germany and Austro-Hungary to the effect that Italy would enter into no war which would involve her in conflict with Great Britain. Italy and Great Britain had always kept up friendly relations. This may in part be explained by the fact that the United Kingdom was sympathetic towards Italy's endeavour to achieve national unification, but we have also to take into account the peninsula's geographical and economic position. Falkenhayn writes *à propos*: 'Italy's open coasts and their populous towns, her dependence upon Britain for her food and coal supplies, rendered it impossible for Italy to enter a war against England.' Germany's attention was drawn to these well-known facts when there was an outcry about 'Italy's treachery'. Already in Caprivi's day, people were dubious as to the trustworthiness of the third partner in the Alliance — mainly because of Austro-Italian rivalries. Italy's value as an ally became questionable when open conflict between Germany and Great Britain was a matter of actual fact. Meurer is justified in saying that a strong maritime power will invariably be much courted and will act as a magnet. But his theory that Italy entered the first World War on the side of the Entente because the menace of the blockade was so

great needs further consideration. True, the pressure of a supreme sea power on Italy can be convincingly demonstrated; but Italy's active participation in the war on the Entente's side is not so easily explained. Three main issues were involved. First, there were certain classes in Italy who held imperialistic views. Secondly, many Italians felt profound sympathy for the French and British. Thirdly, an undeniable fear was abroad that German militarism might dominate Italy — and German militarism was extremely unpopular throughout the peninsula.

Mussolini belonged to a group who constantly urged the government to participate in the war on the Allied side. His demands met with fierce opposition, especially from his fellow socialists. Not that the Italian socialists wished in any way for a German victory, but they were against supporting Italy's imperialist notions of conquest. They, no less than almost the entire Italian population, were pacifists to a man. In view of these facts, it is not surprising that Mussolini put the fight against German militarism into the foreground. Towards the end of 1914, he wrote: 'Some day the question will be asked where you, the Italian proletariat, have been while Europe has been trying to free herself from the nightmare of German imperial hegemony. When that day dawns, you will have no answer ready, you will be ashamed to call yourselves Italians. Then you will curse our priests and socialists as accomplices in the triumph of German militarism. By that time it will be too late to repent.' Unflinchingly, Mussolini wrote and spoke in the same vein. 'Is it your wish to take part in the victory of the Entente merely with newspaper articles and resolutions passed at meetings? Do such sentimental manifestations suffice to save Belgium, to support France who has bled to death for the sake of Europe? Are you content to offer hollow phrases to the France of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen?'

The socialists did not reject Mussolini's counsels because he wished to destroy German militarism but because, so they thought, he was out to crush the German nation as well — for its own good! As Mussolini repeatedly declared: 'We have to bear in mind, and this very clearly, that should the Germans win, we Italians must expect to be ruined.' In his opinion, the Germans had not changed their instincts and what the classical Roman historian wrote nineteen centuries ago was as valid to-day as it ever was, namely, that the Germanic tribes fought merely out of greed and wantonness whereas the Britons fought in defence of their

fatherland and their families. So far as Mussolini was concerned, he was convinced that Germany had deliberately brought about the war in order 'to metamorphise the whole world into one huge and terrible Prussian military barracks'. Hardly any other politician belonging to the Entente powers was as unfair to the German people as was Mussolini by uttering his extravagant diatribes and his simplifications of the issues at stake. If the politicians of other lands spoke acrimoniously about Germany, this was only natural seeing that their countries were at war with the Central Powers and had to face all the sufferings implied by such a situation. But when Mussolini made his attacks, it has to be remembered, Italy was still a neutral. Later in his career, he was to repeat the same reckless and unjust simplifications and slogans against 'the plutocratic democracies', and as in the past he had inveighed against Germany and had trumpeted about her annihilation, so now he declared for the destruction of 'the modern Carthage' as a sacred war of the revolutionary people.

Falkenhayn writes: 'The Italians cannot feel affronted if from a military point of view their achievements are looked upon as trifling. All the same, their intervention in the war served a good purpose.' Other opinions in Germany are far less favourable: It has frequently been pointed out that Italy stood the war so well because she made common cause with the Entente powers and especially with Great Britain. Nevertheless, from 1917 onwards, a lump of sugar, a pound of butter, or a quarter of a litre of olive oil were luxuries even for the well-to-do classes.

When towards the close of 1915, the German General Staff was reconsidering further war measures, the Austro-Hungarian suggestion of finishing off Italy was sternly refused. Falkenhayn felt convinced that 'even were Italy to break off relations with the Entente, which is hardly to be imagined, this act would make very little impression on Britain'. Anyway, Italy's military performance was so paltry that in the best of circumstances she could not escape the iron rod held over her by her British ally, and in Falkenhayn's view it would be foolish to ignore this. Falkenhayn was right in realizing that the main blow should be dealt against Britain. The island realm, so far as he was concerned, placed its trust in a war of attrition. Therefore, he argued, the sooner this confidence was shaken, the better. Thus far, Germany had not been able to do more than hold her own, and this was the reason why the Entente had been strong enough to resist, to continue the fight, and to hold together. He

deemed it impossible to stand on the defensive, for were Germany to do so a moment would inevitably arrive when at a rough estimate Germany's strength would be hopelessly exhausted. On the other hand, a direct assault against the United Kingdom was ruled out so far as Germany was concerned 'as the navy with good reason states'. Undoubtedly a diversion on the eastern front would be most annoying to Great Britain, but Falkenhayn adds: 'A decisive effect, such as the enthusiastic hotheads dream of — an expedition on the Alexander scale to India or Egypt, taking a smack at Salonica on the way — is quite out of the reckoning.' Falkenhayn foresaw the insuperable difficulties in the path of such a project. Furthermore, he declared that Britain after suffering so many reverses with her usual calm indifference 'would prove herself to be no less invulnerable in these remoter lands'. Still, he continues, 'we should be ill-advised were we to abandon the idea of striking at Great Britain somewhere else in Europe'. If Germany can succeed in defeating one or the other of England's continental allies it would be rash to assume that in such circumstances Great Britain would persist in the fight. 'It is not by any means a certainty that Great Britain will throw up the sponge, but we can bank on the probability. Hardly any other issue to the war is to be expected.' The German Chief of General Staff reasoned much as Napoleon had a century earlier, but he could not put his deductions to the proof because the German army was not in sufficient strength at the time.

Doubts, however, assailed Falkenhayn and so he reverted to the old Napoleonic idea of employing recklessly, not only his land forces, but 'every expedient which will help to injure Great Britain in her own element'. This meant economic warfare. In the Europe of the twentieth century this kind of warfare was directed more against English import trade than against her exports. Here the U-boat campaign came into its realm of activity. Not abundance, but sheer lack of supplies was to force Great Britain to her knees. This policy gave any European power waging war against Great Britain a much better chance of success than when Napoleon merely allowed his arch-enemy to stew in her own juice. But we have to take into account that the United Kingdom possessed the supreme advantage of knowing that the continent could not survive the blockade for as long as in Napoleonic times. In order to keep up the counter-blockade of the British Isles as long as possible, Falkenhayn demanded that Germany 'should begin to co-operate both politically and

economically, not only with her own allies but also with all the countries not yet subservient to England's will'. Economic warfare in the twentieth century was different altogether from what it was in Napoleon's day. Yet in both cases it was essential that, for military and political reasons, Europe should be dominated by the most powerful continental power.

'Our U-boat campaign', declared Falkenhayn, 'is aimed at the enemy's most vulnerable spot, for it will try to cut him off from overseas supplies.' If within the year 1916 the promises of the German navy could have been fulfilled and Great Britain been defeated by the new weapon, an intervention from the United States would hardly have counted, for it would have come too late in the day to be of any use in causing important changes and inducing the United Kingdom to continue the struggle. The Chief of the General Staff, however, remarked quite rightly that this rosy picture was marred by one dark spot. The whole project was founded upon the assumption that the German naval authorities were not miscalculating. But Tirpitz and Admiral von Holtzendorff, at that time Chief of Staff to the German navy, gave every assurance that unrestricted U-boat warfare would induce Great Britain to negotiate peace within a few months. One of the men who urgently warned the Kaiser not to indulge in this illusion was Albert Ballin. 'We can', he said, 'perhaps scratch England's skin by these methods, but we shall never be able to force her to seek for peace.' The Kaiser himself admitted that Great Britain could not be compelled into submission. 'Should we challenge her on the high seas and thereby risk coming into conflict with America, every Englishman will fight to the bitter end before he will dream of capitulating.' Tirpitz countered what amounted to a renunciation of the U-boat war by the Kaiser by placing himself on the sick list — a move which served as a pretext to his adversaries to have him cashiered on March 15th, 1916. But the Chief of the General Staff had to be pacified by a compromise, so in February 1916, instead of unrestricted U-boat warfare an intensification of the land fight began which, in due course, resulted in a corresponding intensification of German-American relations.

Now the army command endeavoured yet harder to attain its object by achieving fresh successes on the mainland of Europe. The battle of Verdun started on February 21st, 1916. These thirty weeks of specially rigorous fighting used up about 1,350,000 tons of steel. Such a load needs about 135,000 railway trucks to convey it to the field of battle. During the

## THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

first two months of this terrible battle, the Crown Prince's army fired 8,200,000 shells from their artillery alone. Though in previous wars the same guns were used throughout the campaign and were even used in the following one, in the course of the Verdun battle every one of the guns had to be replaced. Falkenhayn's idea was to 'bleed the French white in the hell of Verdun', and the Crown Prince thought that here the fate of France would be sealed. But although the losses on the French side were heavier than on the German, this end was not achieved. It was Germany as well as France who was bled white, for during the second year of the war a desperate shortage of raw materials was very evident. Major Thomas, who was in charge of Germany's economic warfare, reminded us in 1937 that a shortage of raw materials, sometimes delayed and even hindered the attack on Verdun. To escape the 'hell of Verdun', the soldiers began what is called 'Druckebergerei', or the shirking of military service in the German army.

Added to this, there was a serious food shortage. Workers, animals, and technical equipment were, in an ever-increasing degree, taken from the rural areas. The army needed soldiers, horses, and materials. Fertilizers, too, became scarcer from day to day. As a result, agricultural produce showed a marked decline and concomitantly the stamina and morale of the civilian population declined as well. Though prisoners of war were put to work, especially on the land, this forced labour proved far less productive than free labour — and this was particularly manifest among the Russian prisoners who did not stand comparison with the German agricultural labourer.



Just as tension was growing daily on the economic front, so too was it growing on the political front. Two groups sternly and uncompromisingly faced one another. One group demanded democratization and a negotiated peace, while the other called for a continuation of the traditional conditions and for a victorious peace, which were inseparably connected. Consequently, the German nationalists, who in 1914 thought to start the war by inflicting a political 'Cannae' on Social Democracy and liberalism, set out to make vast conquests both in the west and the east.

But how could Germany secure a victorious peace? On the continent the situation did not create the impression that victory was possible. In

addition, there were men who believed that, even single-handed, Great Britain would fight on if necessary. Long ago, the hope that the British Empire would fall to pieces as a result of the 'holy war' had been abandoned. The waning power of the Turkish Empire was not even able to keep her Mahommedans in check, not to mention the impossibility of mobilizing the whole of the Moslem world against Great Britain. After frustrating in the summer of 1916 the second and last major offensive of the Central Powers to conquer Egypt and gain possession of the Suez Canal, the British army, with an imposing contingent of Arab tribesmen, eventually marched through Syria and Palestine. Turkey, 'the sick man of Europe', then collapsed. It was a fine feather in the Central Powers' cap when, during the last months of 1916, they succeeded in breaking Rumania's resistance. But the Germans had to push on into Wallachia 'so as to improve the food situation', as Major Thomas informs us in 1937, and this went to show 'to some extent' the gravity of the outlook.



It was becoming plainer every day to the Germans that time was on the side of the Entente. All the more reason for hastening the issue. But heated discussions were afoot as to whether this ought or could be best achieved in the political or in the military field. The controversy involved the question as to whether or not the idea of a victorious peace should be abandoned. While one group made good use of newspapers and parliament to press forward the claim to unrestricted U-boat warfare in order to win a decisive victory, Bethmann-Hollweg and other men of responsibility, aware of the difficulties which beset the Central Powers and the menace to Germany should the United States enter the war, worked for all they were worth to induce the Kaiser to offer to 'make peace, using President Wilson as intermediary. This, however, was by no means an easy task in view of Germany's internal situation. For various reasons, Falkenhayn was dismissed in August 1916, to be succeeded by Hindenburg and Ludendorff. They, together with others, regarded certain military measures undertaken by Falkenhayn as aiming at the attrition of the enemy and they most decidedly wished to revert to the strategy of annihilation. Ludendorff, though his thoughts and desires were wholly concentrated on 'bringing the war to a victorious conclusion, agreed, under certain provisos, to the peace offer.

Such cross-currents were bound to influence both the nature and the content of the peace feelers as well as the impression which an offer to make peace would have on all concerned. The mere fact that they had been made provoked indignation and criticism in certain German circles. Owing to the heated discussions about war aims, the conditions of the peace offer were not made public. But the 'victory party' was well aware that its aims could not be achieved through this medium. The other protagonists in Germany, however, did not see in the peace conditions anything other than a preparation for a negotiated peace—and this they considered essential. So exalted were their ambitions that they thought the Entente governments by accepting them would by that very fact recognize the victory of the Central Powers and 'Germany would thus become mistress of Europe', as Ziekursch remarks. We can readily understand why Ludendorff among others showed himself highly sceptical about any action on behalf of peace. Neither could President Wilson show great enthusiasm for such a peace. No wonder that Hindenburg again pressed the Chancellor to pursue unrestricted U-boat warfare even before the tentative inquiries as to a negotiated peace had broken down. Now, both political action and military action were frustrated by the resumption of unrestricted U-boat warfare.

After the war, German historians and diplomats stated again and again that with Wilson's aid a negotiated peace would have been possible had the German government in stating its war aims exercised a modicum of restraint. In such circumstances, the British government would have been hard put to it to persuade the workers into persisting in the conflict any longer than was absolutely necessary in the interests of the nation and the empire. The workers of Britain did not wish to wage an imperialist war and they desired peace.

While in the United States, Count Bernsdorff repeatedly warned his government not to announce the 'unrestricted' U-boat warfare. 'I knew', he wrote later, 'that in Berlin two political groups confronted one another. One of them wished to avoid war with the United States, whilst the other was quite prepared to run this risk provided the U-boat campaign was waged without let or hindrance. I considered it my task to give my support to the first group, since I was firmly convinced that America's entry into the war would irrevocably lead to our ultimate defeat.' The Count was of opinion that no one in the Fatherland under-

stood the peculiarities of the majority of American citizens. The American does not judge of European affairs as the bulk of Germans seem to think. He wrote: 'It is not from the businessman's point of view, dispassionately, that the citizen of the United States views affairs taking place on the European continent. On the contrary, his judgment is determined by emotion and by his strongly developed sense of what is the right and decent way to behave.' Bernsdorff continues in his *Memoirs* '... the impressions which the invasion of Belgium and the sinking of the *Lusitania* created upon the mind of the American public would have been interpreted quite differently had the authorities in Germany been better informed'.

That authority was not informed on the subject in Germany is explained, as Bernsdorff later found out for himself, because the power of the United States was at the time grossly underestimated. It is natural in a country like Germany, where the warrior caste has hundreds of years of tradition behind it and where the officer holds the highest social position, that nations without such a background should have been judged by the kind of armies they kept and the role these were playing. In spite of the evidence of the American Civil War it was considered impossible for America or for Great Britain to improvise vast armies running into millions on the spur of the moment and when it should prove necessary. The Germans believed that they held a monopoly so far as military organization was concerned, and because the Anglo-Saxon idea of discipline differed completely from their own, they imagined that it was bound to be ineffective. How deeply rooted this opinion was among Germans may be gauged from the fact that so able a man as Delbrück wrote as late as 1899 in the October issue of the *Prussian Year Book*: 'The United States ... will never succeed in becoming a great military power. First of all, they have no desires that way; and secondly, the population is so loosely knit that it would be hard to get the conjoint effort needed to make such an undertaking possible in case of need. The time has passed when improvised forces can be used successfully. The men need a long and arduous training full of devotion and sacrifice. Should the Americans launch out on such a venture, they are foredoomed to failure at the outset. The drive which is destined to change the face of the world will not come from the United States.'

Yet it did for all that come from there; and no matter what the ultimate outcome of the present war may be, the impetus for world regeneration will come from the far side of the Atlantic. Delbrück acknowledged this in a later book. Yet hard though it might be to foresee all this before 1914, there was no difficulty in recognizing so obvious a fact in 1916. Then it had become clear as crystal that on a day to come the American continent would play a decisive part in the destinies of Europe. The advocates of a 'victorious peace' had no inkling of the situation, and so far as their purblind obstinacy permitted, they regarded the main economic and political problems of Germany's future as purely military questions. They estimated that Great Britain would have to be defeated before the United States had time to transform her human and material resources into mighty implements of war, and to attain this end the only means available was 'unrestricted U-boat warfare'.

'There can be no doubt that even the most successful naval engagement on our part against England will not force her to sue for peace,' wrote Scheer, the C. in C. of the German fleet, after his inconclusive engagement at Skagerrack on May 31st, 1916, which according to expert opinion took place by sheer accident. 'And the more obvious it becomes', writes Ziekursch, 'that it was wrongheaded on our part to try to build up a fleet to compete with the Mistress of the Seas, the more vociferous are the cries of naval authorities for unrestricted U-boat warfare.' At the beginning of 1916 the German navy was forbidden to put to sea. Yet in May of the same year Scheer ordered his big ships to take the ocean. This move had considerable success, but the naval pundits were more than ever convinced that Great Britain could not be brought to book except by ruthless economic warfare. They therefore got hold of 'reliable' experts who, by utilizing the identical statistical methods on which, in the early days of 1915, 'evidence' had been based that the British plan to 'starve out Germany' had been proved to be utterly unattainable, furnished proof that unrestricted U-boat warfare would, within a few months, bring about the desired results against Britain. Meanwhile the German population was already short of food. This did not, however, undermine its confidence in these statistics. On the contrary, precisely because of starvation — this was the first 'turnip winter' — the people lent a willing ear to their optimistic statisticians. On what else could they base their hopes for a victorious peace? In October 1916 Helfferich, the then Secretary of

Home Affairs, gave this resounding warning: 'If we play our last card, reckless use of the U-boat weapon, and it turns out not to be our trump card, then we are lost, and lost for centuries to come.' Helfferich explained not only the military but also the political problems involved in the U-boat war. 'One has to think', he said, 'of the devastating results a war with the United States would have in regard to the future reconstruction of Germany's economic life. After the war, the re-establishment of Germany's foreign trade relations will be far more difficult than most people seem to imagine.' But should the United States cease to be neutral, he continues, 'it will be hardly possible to bridge the Atlantic, and, for many years to come, Germany will be boycotted like a pariah dog, not receiving even a morsel of bread from anyone in the whole world.' Others than Helfferich harboured identical thoughts and came to the same conclusions. They considered that by taking advantage of an ephemeral success, to confront America with a *fait accompli* was a fantastic illusion. No peace could be forced in this way. The United States would never accept such a peace. Besides, her economic and financial strength as well as her war potential rendered her quite independent in the matter. Problems of secondary importance might have been solved in this way. But the issues facing the Central Powers were on a world-wide scale and needed a different kind of handling. The notion that America would come into the war 'too late' was just as idiotic then as it has proved to be at the present time. Indeed, it turned out to be as great a miscalculation then as it has now.

On December 22nd, 1916, von Holtzendorff, Chief of Naval Operations, issued a memorandum about U-boat warfare. He declared that it would start on February 1st, 1917, and that Great Britain would within five months be forced to sue for peace. According to Helfferich, Germany at that time had one hundred and forty-eight U-boats at her disposal. But, as Rear-Admiral Michelsen pointed out (he was then in command of the U-boats), only one hundred and eleven of these were ready for front-line service. The remainder were needed for training purposes and, anyway, they had to be given a try-out. A year previously, Germany had sixty-two U-boats in commission, so construction had been speeded up considerably during the twelve months. Another fifty were expected to be put into service in the first six months of 1917. Still anti-U-boat technique had not been fully developed at the outset of the campaign, so

that Tirpitz' boast that the U-boats could deal with merchantmen 'like a wolf with a flock of sheep' was justifiable. In addition, the Central Powers believed in the report that Great Britain's stocks of food were 'dangerously low', and that therefore the island realm, owing to food shortage and poor crops all the world over, would have to call upon its citizens to 'tighten their belts considerably if they were not to go hungry'. In Germany this tightening of belts had already been necessary for some considerable time. Another thing the Germans forgot to take into account was that America, if necessary, could reduce her food consumption in order to come to the rescue of her cousins over the ocean. None of these factors had been considered by the authorities of the Central Powers. All they said was: 'If America enters the war as a belligerent, this will neither harm us nor bring succour to our enemy in any decisive way. What with the food shortage and our U-boat campaign which will reduce shipping tonnage, the United States will be incapable of sending considerable reinforcements to the west and Great Britain will be beaten long before America can mobilize her human and economic resources.' Both Hindenburg and Ludendorff declared that they would not hold themselves responsible for military operations should the U-boat campaign hang fire. Thereupon the Kaiser surrendered and the U-boat war was decided upon.

A Crown Council was held on January 9th, 1917, at which this decision was taken. On coming away from it, Baron von Reischach, High Marshal of the Imperial Court, found Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg sitting disconsolately in a chair. 'Have we lost a battle?' asked the baron. 'No', answered the chancellor, 'but it means *finis Germaniae*.' Then he continued: 'For more than an hour I have been attending the Crown Council and pleading against an intensified U-boat war because it will bring America in against us. We shall not be able to stand up to that. Technique has developed to such a degree during the war that certain measures of defence against our U-boats will indubitably be found. The Americans will come. I cannot give you proof of this, but it is my conviction ...' The words were hardly out of the chancellor's mouth when Admiral Holtendorff jumped to his feet exclaiming: 'As an officer in the Imperial navy I pledge my word of honour that not a single American will ever set foot on the continent of Europe.'

Therewith Germany repeated her mistake of 1914, only on a far vaster scale. For the second time a question of the utmost political delicacy was clumsily treated by military hands. For a second time Germany lightheartedly ran the hazard of playing a single card. Just as the invasion of Belgium had decided Great Britain to enter the war, so the U-boat campaign brought the United States into the conflict. Wilson broke off diplomatic relations on February 4th, 1917, and on April 6th — immediately after the first Russian revolution which seemed to the Central Powers to constitute a terrible menace — America declared war. The declaration of war was not due mainly to the prospect of intensified U-boat warfare, but it showed plainly that Imperial Germany intended to achieve victory by fair means or foul; and since the Americans fully realized that world problems were at stake, she gathered up all her available strength and joined in.

The most important thing at the outset was the replacement of tonnage sunk by the U-boats. According to calculations made by the German Naval Staff, victory would be achieved if, within the five months allotted, 600,000 tons were sunk every month. Yet in spite of the German statistics that in February 1917 781,000 tons were sunk, in March 885,000 tons went to the bottom, in April 1,091,000, in May 869,000, and in June, the fifth month, 1,016,000, there were no signs of a German victory. Ballin wrote to Tirpitz in July 1917: 'Herr von Holtzendorff places too much reliance on statistics, and as everyone knows, statistics are liars when one comes down to hard fact.' In the course of the following months of 1917 the German Admiralty produced figures far in excess of the estimated 600,000 tons of sinkings, and still a victorious peace seemed as elusive as ever.

As we learned after the war, the figures of sinking were considerably exaggerated, and we can rely pretty surely on the accuracy of the English documents concerning these facts. I do not mean to imply that in every case the German authorities were deliberately setting out to deceive the public. In any event it is extremely difficult for a U-boat commander to be certain that his estimate of tonnage sunk is absolutely correct. All the same we cannot ignore the fact that the losses sustained by the Entente were very heavy and jeopardized the position extensively. In April, the peak period of losses, the British took a gloomy view of the situation. But, undaunted, the Allies set to work with renewed energy to develop

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the technique of defence against the U-boat peril. The construction of cargo vessels was speeded up still further.

In 1914 the merchant navy of the United States consisted of little more than two million tons, this being approximately 4.5 per cent of world tonnage. A fact which the German Admiralty failed to take into account was the fabulous productive capacity of the United States. The British Empire, too, had considerably increased her construction of ships during this period. Moreover, while this relentless race between offensive and defensive weapons was taking place, an extremely effective technique against U-boats had developed — as Bethmann-Hollweg had anticipated. Germany was taken completely by surprise at this swift race with time, just as her earlier strategy had proved unavailing.

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In July 1917 Erzberger, a member of the Reichstag, disclosed in open session the innumerable faults committed in connection with the U-boat campaign. Many who had placed their trust in the statements made by the Naval Department and the Admiralty had their 'eyes opened for the first time', as a witness put it. Thereupon the Catholic Central Party together with the Majority Socialists (so called because they had broken away from the less radical section) and the Liberals formed a new majority in the House, drawing up a peace resolution of which the most striking passage runs: 'The Reichstag is endeavouring to secure peace by a mutual understanding and a lasting reconciliation of all the nations. But enforced acquisition of territories as well as political, economic, and financial pressure are incompatible with such a peace.'

In 1914 the German social democrats, with very few exceptions, had voted war credits. They went in perpetual fear of tsarism and hated the whole Russian system of that time. They, therefore, deemed it essential to look upon the war as one of defence. Socialists in other countries adopted a similar attitude. The tragedy of the thing was that, though the socialists had been working for peace and understanding among the nations for many years, when war broke out they felt themselves impelled to defend their own hearths and homes. But it so happened that by that time the German workers had been left very little of their liberties to defend. Apart from the nationalists in the government and army, it had been practically decided at the outset to place all the leaders of the socia

democratic party under arrest as soon as war was declared. Friedrich Ebert and Otto Braun, leaders of the party, sensing what was afoot, made their way to Switzerland on August 3rd, 1914, just as their predecessors during the reign of the anti-socialist laws had done. They hoped to guide their party in the right path from that haven of refuge. Aided by outstanding personalities in industry, parliament, government, and army, at the eleventh hour Bethmann-Hollweg succeeded in reaching an understanding with the other socialist leaders. The conditions of this agreement were based on the promise that existing laws against the social democrats, every kind of chicanery against the party as a whole and against trades unions and the socialist press, every movement for the non-acceptance of socialists into the civil service and the army should cease forthwith. As Ziekursch aptly observes, when war broke out 'the German domestic policy went bankrupt'. Yet he is of opinion that any other development would have created intolerable conditions. The Kaiser seemed to be aware of this, and in this crucial hour when the whole of his empire swung in the balance he quickly endeavoured to make good what he had previously tried to bring about by threats and abuse. Socialists no longer existed so far as he was concerned, neither did parties nor creeds. One thing alone came into his reckoning, the German nation. Millions celebrated this change of attitude as the dawn of a new epoch, one of German unity. A left radical group saw in it treason towards Marxism, while the radical group of the right considered it a triumph of Marxism. 'God Almighty', exclaimed Class after reading the Kaiser's proclamation, 'the war is already lost on the home front!' Hitler later declared that 'all armed forces must be ruthlessly employed in order to exterminate the pestilence', while Rosenberg deplored that 'the rabble was not sent immediately to the gallows'. But when the war was over and done with, the conservative author, Major Volkmann, admitted frankly that 'the three most powerful organizations within Germany, namely the army, the social democrats, and the trades unions, had put up a marvellous resistance without which the German nation could not have withstood for so long the many trials and tribulations of the war'.

This opinion was shared not only by impartial historians but also by every military commentator who dealt seriously with the economic, political, social, and psychological problems raised by modern warfare. It has to be acknowledged, however, that the number of such unpreju-

diced persons was relatively few. But the fact remains that these persons were among those who had always been on bad terms with labour and liberalism and were during the war the most fanatical supporters of the idea of a victorious peace. So long as the workers could be fooled into believing that the war was one of defence, the German war machine worked smoothly enough. Yet another motive put them into a good temper. They were granted equality both in the political and the social sphere. As the war proceeded, however, it became increasingly apparent that plans were being set afoot to grab foreign territories and to secure dominance by the ruling class within the frontiers of the Reich. Thus the truce between workers and ruling class established in 1914 gradually broke down and the German nation became more and more obviously divided into two great camps.

'Anything rather than a compromise about the peace, for in such an event we should have to make concessions in the electoral system,' shrieked Max Weber from one camp. This eminent sociologist was shocked that from the very beginning the Nationalists had been doing their utmost to falsify the issues. So far as he was concerned, the war was being waged for the very existence of the nation. For the time being, so the Nationalists alleged, the German people were fighting the western European democracies in order to maintain the integrity of the bureaucratic state structure. But if this were so, Max Weber felt no inclination to buy a ha'p'orth of war-loan securities. From the opposite camp, the socialists vociferated: 'You should have no qualms about the matter, for in spite of our essential differences we are bound together by the enemy's attack on Germany's goods and chattels. Should this tie be severed, leaving the difference in our aims intact, then both parties of the German people will fall asunder and as a nation we shall become powerless.' Scheidemann spoke these words and his name was used by the opposite camp who called a negotiated peace 'the Scheidemann peace'. In May 1917 this socialist leader exclaimed in the Reichstag: 'You Nationalists will succeed in defaming our people as robbers, as a gang of highwaymen, organized on a nationwide scale. But I counsel you not to indulge in your illusions. Never', he added prophetically, 'will you succeed in attaining your aim of subjugating foreign countries.'

Bethmann-Hollweg was dismissed and a 'silent revolution' took place. This was set in motion by the Right and, assisted by the army command,

it practically eliminated the Kaiser. Tension within the army grew apace. In a work published in 1933, Major Altrichter, the Reichswehr Minister, wrote: 'From day to day the people were increasingly clamant in their demands to be informed as to what they were fighting for, and for what purpose such incredible sacrifices were being made. Our soldiers, especially those who came from the industrial areas, were beginning to look at their position from a proletarian point of view. They felt they were being exploited by the ruling classes and their officers.'

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British workers were strongly influenced in their determination to continue the fight precisely because they knew that the German leaders in the struggle were no less determined to win the war. The British workers could be relied upon. The way they were being treated was entirely different from that in which they had been treated during the Napoleonic wars. At that epoch the laws against associations of any kind were rigorously enforced, so that they were unable to organize. But in 1914 their leaders joined the Cabinet, the burdens of war were progressively distributed, and the rights of British men and women workers were constantly extended. Trevelyan in his *History of England* tells us that it would have been impossible to wage war in any other way, far less to win it. The *Industrial War Economy of England 1914-1918* was published in 1934. In this work, the part played by the British trades unions and their activities during the war are described as pre-eminently consisting of putting the brake on sudden outbursts of social tensions which harassed so many other countries involved in the conflict. These activities established equality and co-operation among all British citizens sharing in the economic process. Thereby a stability was produced which, in spite of the heavy reverses the Entente sustained, never broke down.

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Among those who led the fight for the democratization of Germany during the war of 1914-18, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* was a shining example. Again and again it referred to the splendid example given by Great Britain. This newspaper voiced the opinion that only a man who can reconcile domestic policy with the intricacies of foreign policy is fit to be called a national politician. If one dislikes the democratic consequences,

one should drop everything to do with power politics, because it is impossible to carry out such politics in any other way. 'Is it perhaps a mere accident that the most aristocratic assembly in the world, the House of Lords, has passed without hesitation laws on parliamentary representation which are more democratic than anything another power can show? And can any sane person believe that there is no connection between this fact and the attitude of the British workers?'

These words were penned by Max Weber who further pointed out, as he had so frequently done before the war, that a state wishing to see the spirit of its mass-armies based upon a sense of honour and comradeship cannot afford to ignore that in daily life, too, in the economic struggles of the workers, such a feeling of honour and comradeship alone can give rise to those moral qualities of the masses which cannot be developed if the free institutions of the workers are tampered with.

Such a purely military point of view did not affect Great Britain, for conscripted armies were only a continental affair. But once war had been declared by the Central Powers and the conflict seemed to be unending, a voluntary effort on the part of the British workers was needed. Then it became amply evident that the democratic institutions of the trades unions which had been existing for decades proved a blessing from the point of view of expanding British military power. Because of the war, all the hitherto unsolved social problems rose to the surface and those countries which had not endeavoured to solve them in advance were at a huge disadvantage when compared with Great Britain. In the long run such countries were doomed to defeat. It was not by a mere coincidence that the first of the revolutions engendered by the war took place in Russia, whose social and national life under tsarism contained highly explosive material.

When in 1917 the German General Staff gave its permission for Lenin and other bolshevik leaders to make their transit across Germany, it was because they hoped to achieve at long last what they had failed to do with the Russian revolutionary forces during the 1904-05 upheaval and ever since; that is to say, to eliminate Russia as a fighting foe. Though these expectations were fulfilled, Imperial Germany was unable to procure a satisfactory peace on her eastern front. Apart from the fact that Germany had no intention of giving up her war aims, she was (as in Napoleonic days) faced by two alternatives: either the full subordination of Russia's

economic facilities to supply the Central Powers with what they needed in order to carry on the war against Great Britain, or the military occupation of such territories as Germany deemed essential to her war economy. Now it was no longer a question of doing as much harm to the British Isles as was possible. Much greater issues were at stake. A desperate search for food and raw materials was in progress. The Central Powers were not bothering about the leakage in their blockade against Great Britain so much as the urgency of their own lack of food and raw materials. Naturally the bolsheviks were not interested in this problem in the slightest degree. But the Germans took every imaginable advantage of the Russians' military weakness. They even looked to a German revolution taking place in order to get themselves out of the political difficulties in which they were entangled both at home and abroad. To make matters worse, Russia's economic life had to all intents and purposes come to a standstill; the country was starving, and transport facilities were in a state of chaos.

Some persons advocated a shifting of the main weight of the war to the eastern front, since no decisive issue seemed possible in the west and the Central Powers were so completely cut off from international trade communications. Helfferich, Secretary of State to the Treasury, while talking to the Chancellor of the Reich in the early spring of 1915, laid stress on the fact that the time had come when serious consideration should be given to organizing the economic situation just as schemes were afoot for a replanning of the strategical front. His aim was that, since the blockade could not be broken in the west, an assault should forthwith be made upon Russia so as to annihilate her resistance. Field-Marshal von der Goltz was of like mind, for thus only could the Balkans be safeguarded, the Balkans which he looked upon 'as the key position which would alone solve the various problems arising out of the war'. He went on to say: 'If we plan our strategy well and prevent the Russians from retiring into the vast depths of their country, there remains some hope of their concluding a separate peace. This would enable us to utilize the economic resources of this enormous empire.' The men who at the time ruled Germany were, however, not convinced by such arguments.

But in 1917, the bolshevik revolution seemed a godsent means for establishing peace in the east and for breaking down the 'hunger blockade' once and for ever. Yet again, the German High Command showed a

lack of understanding and restraint so that the Central Powers neither received relief from their eastern front nor could they negotiate a compromise peace with the west. Hans von Hentig, in his book *Psychological Strategy of the Great War*, writes: 'Even if a stroke of luck came to us like a thief in the night taking us by surprise, our big guns would let it slip through their fingers.' At a time when the whole world was looking at Germany in order to study her practical methods for securing peace, she bestraddled her victim when he was already bested, cut him to pieces, until every nation which was ready to make peace knew of her impending doom — though she herself continued to celebrate her cheap triumphs. Hoffmann, who was negotiating the peace of Brest-Litovsk, gave the knock-out blow to any fair and honourable chance of peace Germany could expect. General Hoffmann was the representative of the German High Command at this peace conference. Of course the knock-out blow is meant metaphorically, but it perfectly characterizes the methods adopted by this man. Such a jack-boot policy was not favourable to the conclusion of a satisfactory peace, as may well be imagined, and had the Russians been in a position to wage war at the time they most certainly would have done so. But there was nothing else for them to do but accept and sign the dictated peace of Brest-Litovsk.

Before the final ratification of this shameful peace, the Central Powers had made rather dubious peace settlements with certain separatist elements among the Ukrainians. According to the terms of this peace, the Ukrainians pledged themselves to deliver by August 1st, 1918, one million tons of grain to the Central Powers. Soon, however, the government responsible for accepting the peace was driven from power. Ludendorff maintains that at the very outset it was obvious that, taking into consideration existing conditions in the Ukraine, no such deliveries were possible, 'unless the military hand gets to work in the countryside'. Military help was, indeed, needed, for the bulk of the Ukrainian people put up a fierce resistance which proved no less strong than the desire of the forces of occupation for bread. 'The Soviet Ukraine is fighting to liberate herself from the foreign yoke imposed upon her from the west. That is the meaning of what is happening in the Ukraine. It further means that Germany will have to fight for every pound of grain and every particle of metal. The battle now being waged by the Ukrainian people is a desperate one.' These were Stalin's words in 1918, and

in 1941, when a similar situation arose, he spoke the same words again.

Helfferrich wrote: 'Though the great battles of the campaign have come to an end, guerrilla warfare is still going on and stretches from Finland to the Crimea and the Caucasus, thus covering far vaster areas than ever did the campaign proper.' This, together with traffic difficulties, made it impossible for the Central Powers to obtain more than a total of 350,000 truckloads of grain, foodstuffs, and raw material out of the occupied territories up to the end of October 1918. So much for their gains in the vast and wealthy Ukrainian land! Fourteen trucks went to Germany, while the remainder was sent to Austria where the shortage of food had reached the danger point.

'Since hostilities in the west seemed to have come to a standstill, it became increasingly urgent to relieve our troops in the east as soon as feasible and to wrench as great an economic aid from that quarter speedily', writes Helfferrich. Germany achieved no more than a partial success in obtaining the necessary relief, but as to economic aid she got nothing at all.

The German armies had to push on as far as Baku and the Caucasus in order to get supplies of oil for their airplanes and lorries. During the years 1914-18 the Central Powers had to be content with eight million tons of petrol, whereas the Entente, possessing sea supremacy, could afford to consume as much as twenty-eight millions in the same period. It is not hard to understand that Germany, after the Russian military collapse and the dictated peace of Brest-Litovsk, should place her hopes in obtaining the much needed oil from the Caucasian oilfields. The bolshevik government was forced to pledge itself to the delivery of various raw materials, among which was oil, because this was the only way of squeezing out of the occupying Germans in the Donetz basin the necessary coal and other things which they urgently needed. The Germans for their part promised to put pressure on their Turkish allies so as to prevent them from taking Baku from the Russians. The Germans found no great difficulty in complying with the bolsheviks' demands, for they had every intention of keeping this valuable area for themselves and not allowing 'the sick man of the Bosphorus' to lay his hands upon such an asset. In his work on *The World War*, Dr. Helfferrich writes concerning this business: 'The oil wells of Baku, connected as they were with pipe-lines running to the Black Sea, were certainly of capital importance to Germany. But

no less important were the rich manganese mines of Georgia. Both were essential for Germany to prosecute the war and also for the period of transition from war to peace.' Helfferich further states on this subject: 'Our Turkish ally has every intention of regarding the whole area of the Caucasus as his particular sphere of interest and of acting accordingly. Naturally this has led to tense relations between Turkey and Germany in general and the High Command in especial, for they, too, had their eye on this profitable territory.' Soviet Russia was likewise drawn into the vortex. As regards oil, the Germans could rely neither on the Russians nor the Turks. Ludendorff writes in this connection: 'The attitude adopted by the Turks at Baku confirmed all our suspicions.' And he adds in a somewhat regretful tone: 'Turkey claimed all the oil they found available and were disinclined to spare a drop for anyone else.' Under the command of Colonel Kress, a German expedition was, therefore, sent to Tiflis. Ludendorff further informs us that 'stronger action had to be taken' because of the situation in regard to raw materials. 'Only if we took the Baku oil with our own hands could we be certain of getting any.' But the Turks acted more promptly than the German authorities, and while the Central Powers were still engaged in the fight for the Caucasus, the whole war front petered out.

In many ways, Ludendorff's march eastward resembled Napoleon's. In both cases it was the invulnerability of British sea power which dictated the direction these marches should take. It was because Great Britain remained Mistress of the Seas that in 1916 the Central Powers were forced to invade Wallachia; and it was for an identical reason that in 1918 Germany had to push forward into the Ukraine and as far as the Caucasus. Just as in 1812 Russia had to suffer because British sea power could not be broken, so in 1918 these sufferings were renewed because the British Isles were impervious to invasion. In both instances it proved essential to subjugate Russia on account of economic strains and stresses. Yet we have to recognize that the economic motives had considerably altered since Napoleonic days. Consequently, the Baltic took a secondary place when compared with the fertile south of Russia with its abundance of raw materials. Yet, again in both cases, these territorial expansions were merely 'evasive actions, forced upon the Germans by British sea power', as Captain Schulz puts it when he is drawing his parallel between the earlier and later problems. 'We needed grain and raw materials, and

in order to get what we wanted we had to march deep into an alien land. We had no other choice,' Ludendorff admits in his *Memoirs*. 'Rumania had ceased supplying us, and, left to her own resources and without any help from abroad, Germany simply could not exist.' Kuhl, another authority on this period, writes: 'The Austrians openly announced that their country was at the end of its tether and that the food situation was catastrophic. The Ukraine had to be occupied because there were no essential resources remaining to the Central Powers.'

Even so, these gigantic territorial expansions did not suffice to ease the situation in central Europe. The Entente was fully aware of this fact and therefore continued even more doggedly to fight out the issue. It had by now become more than obvious that Germany intended to be satisfied with nothing less than a victorious peace and that she was preparing the ground by holding on to her gains in the east as well as in the west so as to have, as it were, a springboard from which to launch her demands. Ludendorff and others were in complete agreement with these aims. Commenting on all this after the war was ended, Colonel Schwertfeger quite rightly observes: 'The memory of what took place during the Napoleonic epoch should have sufficed to warn everyone concerned that Great Britain, with her fabulous resources, is capable of great efforts when the life of the nation is at stake.' Great Britain and her allies had at this moment no reason whatsoever for being complaisant in regard to the policy which it would be expedient to adopt towards the Central Powers. The tonnage of merchantmen and other vessels sent to the bottom had showed a marked decrease; the U-boat terror was practically laid. The vast territorial acquisitions of the Central Powers showed how very effective the blockade had been.

But although in the end the blockade proved to be the decisive factor and demonstrated the fact that a victory on land was impossible and, further, that the Atlantic Ocean was the main theatre of the war (the U-boat campaign being a mere side-issue of the whole struggle), yet the German High Command, after the failure of the economic war against Britain, still indulged in the delusion that a victorious peace might be gained by striking a decisive blow in the west. The dictated peace on the eastern front, though a very shaky affair, held at least a million troops tied up in Russia. In spite of this, the Germans launched another big offensive in the west. They knew that further and far larger American

contingents were likely to land. The slogan 'Win before American help can be effective' was, therefore, once again the cry throughout the land. As we have seen, the Central Powers had endeavoured to win the initiative over the United States by starting their U-boat warfare in the spring and summer of 1917. Now in 1918 they hoped to win the same advantage over the American expeditionary armies by launching their spring offensive. But though Germany had assembled extraordinary forces to deal with the issue victoriously, and although some tactical successes were achieved, the Central Powers suffered a crushing defeat. French soil became a cockpit so far as land armies were concerned. But the Entente by now held supremacy even in this field, both as to men and materials, so that in spite of their best endeavours the Central Powers totally collapsed.

Owing to the Americans' timely aid, the U-boat war was already lost by January 1918. Yet Tirpitz obstinately persisted in saying: 'American help is and will remain a figment of the imagination.' At this same juncture, Hergt, German Minister of Finance, declared: 'The great army from across the ocean cannot swim or fly, so we know it will never make a landing on European shores.' These prognostications notwithstanding, there were already 224,655 American troops on the western front; a month later the number had increased to over a million; and by November 1918 there were more than two million American soldiers fighting side by side with the Entente. Not one transport vessel fell a victim to the U-boats. Part only of the American troops could be made use of, for many were still in training. Ludendorff had to admit: 'Within a few months, the Americans have sent more troops over to France than I could have thought possible.' Yet mobilization on the grand scale had merely begun when the general spoke those words. The American authorities reckoned that by July 1919 the army's strength would be in the region of 5,000,000 men. On November 1st, 1918, it amounted to 3,634,000 men. Approximately 10,000,000 American citizens were liable to be called up. When the United States decided to enter the war, her army consisted of 105,000 men of whom 25,000 were stationed in the Philippines. At the end of December 1914 the *New York Times* observed that the whole of the American army could find comfortable accommodation in the new football ground of Yale University. But in May 1917 compulsory military service was introduced. So that for all Admiral

Holtzendorff's pledging his honour that no Americans would or could set foot on European soil, more and more United States troops effected a satisfactory landing.

America's industries, like her army, were about to come with full force into the arena when Germany's strength was exhausted. The speed with which a soldier could be trained to undertake his duties was considerably greater than that of producing arms for his equipment, so that the Americans had to depend at first on their allies for these essentials. When the League of Nations investigated the subject of industrial mobilization, the Americans submitted a report in which it was stated that, among other things, the change over from ordinary industrial production to war-time needs required at least from twelve to twenty months to get into train. The United States have, as we know, immense natural resources and big industrial plants, and money was flying about pretty recklessly. Yet 'our government', so the report proceeds, 'had to rely entirely on our allies for front-line military equipment. Our troops were entirely dependent upon our allies for everything save only food and cash. Guns, munitions, aircraft, everything, our dependence upon our allies remained absolute right up to the day of the armistice. Out of all the guns produced during the war by the United States, only four reached the front before the armistice — nineteen months after war had been declared. During the battle of the Argonne, which ended nineteen months after the declaration of war, the larger calibre guns had not fired a single shell produced in the United States.'

The first American-produced airplanes reached the western front in August 1918, the first tank left the factory in October 1918, and up to the end of the war not more than sixteen were used by the army in the west. By the time the war ended, American industry had been mobilized and mass-production of guns, tanks, aircraft, and ammunition could have been set afoot. But Germany, as we have seen, was beaten before America could bring into the struggle her full fighting strength and thus enter the blood-drenched field of the first World War.

Although Germany had based all her plans on a swift decision and although in 1916 it became even more imperative to reach it on account of the economic, military, and political situation at home, just when the Central Powers had become convinced that the Entente meant to allow the static warfare to drag on indefinitely, the enemy developed a new

weapon which would economize war material and smash up the Central Powers for good and all. This weapon was mobile warfare. Guderian, the Panzer General, wrote about this new method in 1936: 'Clever Englishmen such as General Swinton and Winston Churchill, together with a handful of Frenchmen, quite independently of one another, had a brain wave. They simultaneously conceived the idea that a break through the barbed-wire defences and an emergence from the trenches was essential. They were determined to convey their firing power with cannon, machine-guns, and their crews over to the enemy entrenchments and finish him off at close quarters. To carry out this purpose they needed a vehicle which was sufficiently mobile and invulnerable against infantry attack. They chose the caterpillar tractor, whose construction was based on the Holt tractor, and armoured it. Thus the tank came into being.'

As with every newfangled weapon, the performance of the tank was at the outset rather disappointing. It covered about five miles an hour and the handling of it was by no means an easy task. On September 16th, 1916, the first tanks made their debut on the front. There were ten of them and all ten were destroyed on the battlefield. But as this new weapon was perfected, General Byng, Commander of the Third English Army, took up the suggestion made by the Royal Tank Corps to launch an attack entirely supported by tanks. This assault took place in November 1917. For the first time in military history, the tank was to take precedence of every other arm. On November 20th, 1917, the first tank battle in the history of the world was launched. A new method of warfare had come to birth. In this battle three hundred and fifty tanks together with a thousand aircraft operated. General Fuller considers this battle to have revolutionized warfare. Among other Germans of note, Major Hesse declares that this tank battle at Cambrai 'opened a new era in warfare'.

Owing to its three main characteristics—protection against bullets, manoeuvrability, and power of attack, the tank inaugurated a new era in mobile warfare. According to Fuller and his compatriot Liddell Hart, both of whom are considered by German military experts to be outstanding champions of the motorization and mechanization of the army, the introduction of the tank was the logical result of static warfare. Steam power created the armoured ship, and during the first World War petrol gave birth to the tank. When armoured vessels made their appearance during the War of Secession, the Englishman Sir John Hay said: 'Whoever

goes into battle in a wooden ship is a madman, and the person who gives him orders to do so is a rogue.' After the first tank battle, Fuller might well have said: 'He who goes forth to battle in a woollen coat is a madman, and the person who orders him to do so is a rogue.' If we are to believe Captain Ritter, the German High Command looked for far too long a time upon the tank as a kind of technical toy, as a sort of bogey to frighten children with and, 'once deprived of its moral effects, turned out to be not such a fearsome monster after all and one with which the German soldier, being a man of steady nerves, could deal with much in the same way as his ancestors had done with the lions let loose upon them by the Romans — namely with their cudgels'. As late as the summer of 1918 the successes achieved by the new weapon were attributed to the fact that the troops just 'got frightened' when these monsters came into action — which only goes to show, as Captain Ritter remarks, how great was the relapse of the High Command into their proverbial dislike of any technical developments in the matter of lethal weapons. Captain Ritter was not alone in his criticism. In 1936, Justrow, the well-known army technician, wrote an encyclopaedia. He was commissioned to do this on behalf of the German Society for Politics and the Science of War. Herein we can read: 'Helped by our superior technique, our operations started admirably in 1914. But we failed to keep up with the technical standard and thus came to a standstill. But after experiencing the "miracle of the Marne" and all the sufferings it entailed, did we read the fiery writing on the wall and draw the logical conclusions? Outwardly, yes. The High Command set about the task imposed upon it and organized for war on a given basis, with trenches, barbed-wire defences, concrete, armour, machine-guns and guns of all sorts, mortars, flame throwers, wireless apparatus, rockets, etc., etc., which from a technical point of view were quite excellent. But did our High Command change inwardly as well? Unfortunately it did not. They persisted in utilizing technical innovations with the old methods of procedure, hoping thereby to break down the enemy's defence. But they failed to alter their attitude of mind, nor were they able to take the foe by surprise with the use of utterly unthought of weapons. Of course the tank provided them with an opportunity, at least at the beginning, of appearing to be invincible and well on the way to winning the war. Our enemies, on the other hand, made the best use possible of this new weapon, and it was with the help of tanks that in 1918

they gained a decisive victory while we were still endeavouring to get anti-tank defence into order and on a sufficiently large scale.'

The Germans captured sixty tanks at Cambrai. In spite of this, they had merely forty-five of these against the Entente's three thousand five hundred! In November 1917, the Allies had from six to seven hundred tanks to put into action. In 1918, the French High Command ordered four thousand and Great Britain five thousand. On April 24th, 1918, seven British tanks, manned by twenty-one officers and men, crushed their way into three German battalions and killed more than four hundred men. According to Fuller, British losses per square mile of recaptured territory amounted to five thousand three hundred men during the period from July to November 1916. In the same period of 1917 there were eight thousand two hundred losses. But in the same period of 1918, when tanks had been introduced and were in full operation, the losses amounted to only eighty-three men.

At long last the German High Command began to ask whether the tank was really a child's boggy, just made to frighten the life out of the poor little fellow. Lengthy discussions and experiments were needed before, in the summer of 1918, mass-production of tanks was put into commission. But the first thousand tanks could not leave the assemblage yard until 1919. By this time, the Entente could have launched gigantic fleets of tanks into active service. Had the British programme alone been carried out, by the spring of 1919 no fewer than eight thousand tanks and ten thousand supply tractors would have been ready. Fuller wrote in 1930 that had the war lasted but one year more the world would have seen vast armies of tanks thrown into the fray.

Even supposing that Germany could have gained some advantage in the matter of tank production, it was only under the most favourable conditions imaginable that she could have succeeded in changing the face of things on the land front, for the Entente were exploiting their advantages to the full at this time. If the Germans had realized the important role which the tank was to play in the future of the war, it was already too late for them to remedy the lack of this weapon by placing mass-production of tanks in the forefront and putting them into active service. Captain Ritter and others consider that the difficulties presented owing to shortage of material could have been overcome and that it was lack of understanding as to the value of the new weapon which was answerable

for Germany's failure to produce tanks immediately, yet he and his colleagues have to admit that production in quantity could only have been effected at the expense of the navy. But neither he nor anyone else answers the question as to where the necessary petrol for the running of a mechanized army was to come from. Ludendorff writes in this connection: 'In spite of oil deliveries from Rumanian oilfields, the situation in regard to fuel was a precarious one which rendered waging war as arduous and difficult as life was on the home front.' Dr. Ferdinand Friedensburg, in his study of *Oil During the World War*, published at Stuttgart in the spring of 1939, states: 'Though Germany's military technique was in one way or the other still able to cope with these manifold difficulties, the shortage of fuel-oil made it impossible to mechanize the army save on an extremely modest scale. But the construction and commissioning of submarines, airplanes, and tanks, which were the most important modern weapons of war, was restricted owing to the dearth of oil.'

In any case, at that time and owing to the shortage of these essential raw materials, Germany was in no position to put up effective resistance to the gigantic tank armies which would have careered over the battlefields in 1919. For a similar reason, Germany was outgeneralled in the air. In 1918, Germany produced each month only two thousand to Great Britain's four thousand airplanes.

For the whole duration of the war the western powers held their supremacy in the air, not particularly because they had the advantage of numbers when the war started but because throughout the conflict they were masters of the ocean routes and were thus able to get all the supplies of oil and raw materials they needed. Even if Germany had not been inferior in the matter of aircraft before the war and had, on the contrary, been superior in this realm, it would not have proved much to her advantage in the long run and could only have lasted for a limited period because mastery in the air is dependent on supremacy at sea.

In February 1936, Major-General Metz reminded his readers in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* that during the latter part of the 1914-18 war the Germans, in order to have a sufficiency of artillery ammunition for a large-scale attack, needed to work as many days and nights to provide the shells as the Entente produced in as many hours. 'We had too few motor vehicles and what we did have ran on iron tyres instead of on

rubber ones.' An ominous sign of this dearth of rubber was shown by the fact that the German High Command discontinued gas attacks, nor was any interest manifested in the intensive use of gas, because the enemy had plenty of rubber coats for protective purposes whereas the Germans possessed practically none.



The almost impossible task of procuring raw materials was matched by the equally difficult task of getting food, and the situation in both respects deteriorated increasingly and considerably. Even old people had to queue up day and night if they were to stand a chance of getting a small quantity of very dubious food. Often they found that they had been standing there for hours in vain. According to German statistics, about 800,000 persons died from hunger during the war, 180,000 of them in the course of 1917 and approximately 300,000 in 1918. Skalweit points out that the Germans were still hoping for deliverance from their tribulations by employing new methods of economic organization and by the emergence of 'strong men'. These expectations were doomed to disappointment 'because the problem was not capable of solution'. Morale at home and at the front became increasingly worse. Curiously enough it was among the technical units who were treated far better than any other of the German troops that morale was at its lowest, Pintschovius tells us. Lieutenant-General Marx reports that 'the more an army unit was mosaicked with persons practising "modern professions", the greater was the danger of morale breaking down'. This problem, coming on top of the shortage of raw materials and oil, was in the main the cause of Germany's incapacity to build up a tank corps comparable to that which the Entente was able to put into action in 1918. Germany's fate was being sealed.

On August 8th, 1918, at Amiens, four hundred and fifty British and ninety French tanks, supported by two thousand six hundred guns of all calibres and five hundred aircraft, brought about the 'black day' of the German army. It was on this memorable occasion that the Entente, with its new methods of warfare, pierced the German lines, completely routing their opponents. The sudden advance of the columns of tanks found the German Divisional Headquarters utterly off their guard. Troops and their officers were rendered helpless. Hindenburg named this August 8th 'the

fatal day' of the German army, while Hans von Zwehl, the Prussian military author, wrote: 'We were not beaten by the genius of General Foch but by the weight of General Tank.'

Ludendorff writes that August 8th confirmed the opinion that the German army was in a decline so far as its fighting strength was concerned. Also it became clear as day that the German war machine was no longer up to the mark. Soldiers who after an attack returned alive to their units were jeered at as 'scabs' and a further jest was added to the effect that they 'were prolonging the war'.

Soon after this battle a Crown Council assembled at Spa and decided to approach the enemy in order to negotiate peace. On June 24th, 1918, Secretary of State von Kuhlmann declared in the Reichstag that since the war could not be brought to a close by force of arms, diplomatic negotiations with the Allied leaders should be undertaken. Thereupon the High Command compelled the Kaiser to dismiss him. But after August 8th these same men were in a great hurry to start negotiations. They were all the more clamorous for a speedy settlement because on September 15th, 1918, Bulgaria severed relations with Germany, so that the latter's communications with Austro-Hungary on the one part and with Rumania on the other were gravely imperilled. The Entente armies in the Balkans were expected any day to occupy Rumania, thus cutting Germany off from her oil supplies. Apart from the supply of Rumanian oil, the Germans could not keep pace with the mechanization and motorization of the Entente armies. In the absence of the Rumanian supplies, Germany would have had to reduce by half, and within two months, her motor traffic and put an end to her aviation. Friedensburg writes that the German oil situation was obvious to all.

On October 3rd, the German High Command again urged 'that an offer of peace be made immediately to our enemies'. So far as one is able to judge, they declared, there is no hope whatsoever of forcing the enemy to start peace negotiations. 'Swift action was, therefore, urgently needed, for 'every day lost is costing us thousands of brave soldiers' lives'. In saying this, the German High Command unreservedly acknowledged military collapse. No longer did they stand out against the democratization of Germany. Quite the contrary. Ludendorff showed himself especially ardent in the introduction of the necessary reforms. His liberal and social democratic opponents of yesteryear did not refuse to take over

responsibility, but they did so on condition that Ludendorff resigned and had no further finger in the pie. His place was filled by Gröner who for long had been insisting that it would be well for Germany if the war finished in a 'draw', which would make it essential for the country to readjust her whole political and strategical position. It was unfortunate for Germany that Gröner's ideas were not put into execution.



The Kaiser wished, with the aid of the social democrats, to rebuild the Reich anew. He actually said that he wanted to become 'the first social democrat'. But such a compromise was no longer possible. His whole position was threatened and the notion sprang up that he could be saved only by a civil war. This idea, however, was rejected by the more sensible among German military men who, under the leadership of Gröner, had in recent days stepped into the foreground. Ludendorff's successor declared that the army could no longer be relied upon and that it had ceased to support His Imperial Majesty. Even Hindenburg agreed with these statements. William II and his entourage began to vociferate about 'the military oath' and 'the Supreme Commander-in-Chief', etc. To which Gröner answered: 'Military oath? Supreme Commander-in-Chief? These are mere words signifying nothing. They are nothing but an "idea".'

The dictum that if ordered to do so a soldier had 'to shoot his father or mother' had by the end of the war become obsolete. No wonder, when we remember that so many millions of men had become involved in the struggle. In Germany there were thirteen and a half million; in Austria, nine million; in Russia, more than fifteen million; in France and her colonies, approximately eight and a quarter million; in the British Empire, eight million three hundred thousand; and in the other belligerent countries taken together, sixty-nine million. All these men had been called up and mobilized. And all these millions of men were not going to carry out such a crazy order as that of 'shooting their father or mother' at the behest of a Kaiser or anyone else. Engels proved a reliable seer when he wrote: 'At such a juncture, the prince's army will change into a people's army, the military machinery will break down, and militarism will die from the "dialectics" of its own development.' The revolutionary movement began in the navy. The movement had been looked upon in Ger-

many as 'a palliative for educated and uneducated social democrats'. In his diary, which is of especial interest from the psychological and sociological point of view, Stumpf, an able-bodied seaman belonging to the Christian Socialist organization, writes: 'All of a sudden one was in the thick of it and none could explain how we got there.' This shows how spontaneous the revolution was and what an insignificant part revolutionary propaganda put out by certain small groups played in the movement. Be this as it may, Major Altrichter, in his work on *The Moral Strength of the German Army in Peace and During the World War*, does not confine himself to so simple an explanation of the revolution nor does he maintain that it was 'staged by demagogues'. He writes: 'The masses had ceased to believe in the idea of an Imperial Germany . . . Only those political institutions which are based upon the convictions and the free will of the people can be considered genuine and well-established powers. When these conditions cease to exist, such institutions inevitably collapse because there remains nobody who is willing to fight for their survival.'

Admiral von Altvater, of the Russian navy, once described to the German General Hoffmann how the troops under his own command 'literally dwindled away', and he added prophetically: 'The same thing will happen with your own army.' General Hoffmann, as he himself notes, scoffed at such an idea. 'I laughed at him because I thought it quite impossible.' But Admiral Altvater's words were very soon justified. 'An unknown and uncanny power has raised its head', writes Major Altrichter, 'and this unknown and uncanny power proved to be the "soldiers' councils".' The conservative General von Freytagh-Loringhoven and others who had lived through November 9th, 1918, in Berlin report much the same thing: 'The revolution caught us all napping and we felt utterly helpless in the face of it.'

Later on, General Gröner wrote that 'in the autumn of 1918 the political harvest had just ripened after having been sown in the course of a long period of historic development'. But he did not mean to imply that the collapse of a half-absolutist Germany was fated to take place merely because 'the highly developed culture and civilization of great nations bear within themselves the germ of the democratic idea'. His words were, rather, intended as a criticism of Imperial Germany's home and foreign policy in the course of many decades. Even had Germany been able to introduce democratic reforms in the course of the war, this gesture would

not have given her the victory against a world in arms with its focal point based in Great Britain. But had such a democratic Germany come into existence, it would not have wanted a victorious issue, nor would such an issue have been necessary to her. She would have entered into peace negotiations in good time so as to avert catastrophe. Important as sound democratic institutions undoubtedly are, they cannot produce food and other materials when these are not to be had for love or money.

Germany was unable to destroy British sea power and the blockade which was based upon it. Consequently, the Central Powers became a beleaguered fortress. In the course of the war the outworn political and social differences grew starker than ever before and the rate of democratic development went quicker than it would have done given normal circumstances. In the end, when the knell of the old system was tolling, Germany collapsed completely.

To use Captain Schultz' words: 'The experiences of the World War have fully confirmed the fact that modern industrialized countries are eventually absolutely dependent on supplies from overseas, otherwise they suffer intolerably from any form of blockade. In all great wars, when the strongest and fittest nations are fighting for their position in the world — as was the case in the Punic wars, in Napoleonic times, and again during the recent Great War — victory comes to those nations who, while waging war, are able to make use of the economic, political, and strategical advantages accruing to them through their dominance of the seas. This is, pre-eminently, the decisive factor.'

## INTERLUDE BETWEEN TWO GREAT WARS

THE outcome of the first World War showed clearly that no single continental power could act on its own initiative for a protracted period and just as the fancy pleased it. A bolshevization of defeated Germany was, therefore, unimaginable and quite out of the question, for she would have been liable to a further blockade, with famine and renewed warfare as consequences. Moreover, when the effects of a revolution are taken into consideration, there is a vast difference between a great but backward agricultural country like Russia and a highly developed state like Germany. In Russia it was right and proper for the bolsheviks to seize power, for they had not the fate of the whole of Europe to worry about. With the thick-headedness customary among continentals, the bolsheviks and other revolutionaries of the left thought they could bring about a revolution the wide world over. But since the focus of international politics lies in the Anglo-Saxon world which is welded together in the powerful United States of America and in the mighty British Empire, no revolution on a global scale could be anything else than utopian so long as these two countries failed to join in the issue. Also we have to take into account that, if only for purely sociological reasons, these two lands showed not the slightest inclination to adopt the bolshevik outlook. Further it must be remembered that the industrialized proletariat of western European lands had already acquired rights and privileges far in advance of the forms and methods of the bolsheviks.

Even the non-bolshevik radicals of the left and the moderate social democrats of Central Europe found themselves cribbed and confined in their activities as soon as they tried to achieve their aims. The German Socializing Commission declared that the first thing to do was to organize economic life and revive production, exports, and international trade relations. There was no prospect of accomplishing this without the collaboration of Great Britain and the United States, let alone endeavouring to work against them. Thus the two Anglo-Saxon powers were in a position to put a brake on the German revolutionary movement. They were also

able to check the counter revolution, for the erstwhile rulers of Germany could not expect to be treated leniently in the field of economics and foreign credits any more than their opponents of the radical persuasion. To differentiate between the two would have led to catastrophic results.

Professor Duisberg, the leading chemical research worker who from 1924 to 1931 was head of the Reich Association of German Industrialists, put the following question to his compatriots in 1919: 'Would it not perhaps have been better if the chemical industry had not worked so hard and achieved such immense success?' He had in mind that had it not been for the remarkable achievements of the chemical industry, the war might have ended sooner and Germany, together with the whole world, might have been spared such terrible sufferings for so many years in succession. Even had Germany come out of the fray with flying colours, Duisberg continued, she would have been at the end of her tether. In conclusion he observed: 'I do not intend to indulge in further reflections upon such might-have-beens. So many other things are linked up with the whole problem. But I wished to draw attention to this outstanding fact.'

Similar thoughts found expression in post-war Germany over and over again. Count Bernstorff openly declared that he had wished to keep the United States out of the war and had done his best to see that she remained neutral, but his endeavours proved unavailing. Now that the war was over, it may be objected 'that had the United States entered the war at an earlier date this might have been a good thing. The military pressure and our own defeat in consequence would have saved us from two more years of struggle. The German people would have then accepted the fact that their country was defeated before the breakdown of morale had occurred and they would not have been crushed by the war and the blockade which lasted four long and dreary years'.

• Helfferich had put up a good fight against unrestricted U-boat warfare — though he ate his words later. But in the sequel he was quite off the mark when he declared that in the event of Germany being beaten she would be finished and done with for centuries to come and would suffer such a boycott that she would be 'like a pariah dog to whom not a soul would throw a morsel of bread'. It is likely that precisely because the U-boats failed in their purpose that Germany did not in the end become this pariah dog to whom nobody would throw a morsel of bread. At any rate, the Americans showed themselves to be very magnanimous towards

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defeated Germany, for they not only sent food but also granted her huge credits a short time after the war had come to an end.

The United States stood on an economic pinnacle at the close of the war. During the years 1914-20 her export trade increased from 2,400,000 dollars to 8,200,000 dollars. From being a debtor state in 1914, she became a creditor state to the whole world after the war. In 1927 the world in general owed the United States 21,000,000 dollars. Germany, on the other hand, had in 1913 credits abroad amounting to over 25,000,000 marks, yet after the war she became the greatest debtor state in the world. According to Dr. Eicke, director of the Reich Bank, Germany was then burdened with short-term and long-term debts to the tune of 27,000,000 marks in 1930. It must not be forgotten that Germany paid 11,000,000 marks for reparations out of credits she had received after the war. Neither must the fact be overlooked that it was only by receiving foreign credits that she was able to rebuild her industry and agricultural undertakings and bring prosperity to them before very long. Owing to these credits from abroad, chiefly from the United States, German industrial production increased by 42 per cent from 1921 to 1929, whereas British production increased by only 16 per cent during the same period and that of France by 27 per cent. In 1913 German imports amounted roughly to 10,800,000 marks, her exports to 10,000,000 marks. The corresponding figures for 1925 were: imports, 12,400,000 marks; exports, 9,300,000 marks. By 1929 Germany's exports amounted to 13,500,000 and her imports to the same figure in marks. Thus the pre-war standard was not merely recovered but overhauled within a decade of Germany's defeat. This economic success was achieved in spite of her having no army to speak of and no navy whatsoever, since by the terms of peace the whole of the latter had to be handed over to the Entente.

But after 1933 Germany's importance as a power in the economic field went sadly awry, precisely because the relation between power politics and economic relations is a far more complicated thing than the advocates of the former will admit. Yet in reality the delicate relationship between power politics and economic life is obvious. The National Socialists drew their strength from the economic situation which had recovered beyond the dreams of fancy. This had been accomplished in so short a time because the Second Reich prosecuted no war on the economic front but collaborated with the League of Nations under Stresemann's

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guidance, which was full of insight. In these circumstances, Germany received the necessary credits from abroad. Stresemann estimated that there was but one way to avoid a total collapse of German economic life with its inevitable consequences. His solution amounted to a close collaboration with financially stable states. There were few to be found in disagreement with his policy. So far as Germany's international trade relations were concerned, it was not a practical proposition for her to throw in her lot with Russia to the exclusion of other nations, since the Soviet state, at least in the earlier days of post-war reconstruction, played a minor part in the German economic scheme. Moreover, there was not the least chance of securing credits from that country. For this and other reasons it is not the east but the west which proves of such supreme importance in settling Germany's fate, whether in war or peace. What is valid for Germany is equally valid for the remainder of Europe. Europe in general could not have made so speedy an economic recovery had it not been for loans and other aid from foreign countries.

The circles in post-war Germany which thought in terms of world political economy were well aware of the fact that Europe could not be placed on a satisfactory economic footing without the help of the United States and that no coalition of powers, whatever it might be, could impose its will by political, economic, or military pressure upon the coalition of the Anglo-Saxon world. Bernstorff put the issue as follows: 'I cannot be too emphatic in declaring again and again that we possessed no means whatever for putting pressure on the United States and it would have been easy for the Americans to wage war against us.' Some are inclined to think that had Germany approached Japan at that crucial hour, indirect pressure might have been exercised. Others prefer to differ, saying that had such a tentative approach been made, it would have brought the United States earlier into the war and would have rubbed her up the wrong way at the very start.

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The Germans, who thought only in military terms, did not deem it worth their while to take all these considerations into account. Most of them attributed Germany's defeat with all the consequences entailed to the frustrated effort to achieve the longed-for 'Cannae'. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the battle of the Marne takes precedence

among the manifold legends which have arisen as the outcome of the German defeat. A lengthy tirade about the German armies being within forty miles of Paris was made. Nor for long could it be denied that the German right wing was too weak to push forward. But this weakness is blamed on to that 'damned Reichstag which sabotaged any attempt to bring up the strength of the Central Powers' armies, during 1912 and 1913'. All these were no more than legends which found complete denial in the documents published by the 'Reichsarchiv'. Herein we find it stated that 'the bewitchment of the German military forces cannot be laid at the door of the national assembly'. Still, those associated with the old regime and who were trying their best to vindicate its actions, deliberately ignored the evidence of the 'Reichsarchiv's' records. There was another group which endeavoured to prove that a 'military Cannae might have been achieved even with depleted forces had Schlieffen himself led the armies forth to battle'. Perhaps these persons felt that they had been guilty of neglect in times past. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* countered by printing a leading article on January 9th, 1939, to the effect that even Schlieffen could not have conjured up the necessary troops if they did not exist; and it was precisely this lack of troops which constituted the major problem. The writer of this article said further that anyone who wished rightly to understand pre-war conditions and to form a true judgment of the men responsible for the 1914-18 campaign would have to search the annals of German history for many decades past. I myself, having delved into these annals, feel assured that none need be puzzled by the fact that so many adherents of the old regime preferred flight into mysticism rather than facing facts. The very high percentage of German officers killed in the course of the campaign goes to disprove the assertion that they expected more bravery to be shown by others than by themselves. Yet many officers of the old regime failed in the intellectual courage which was needed for a full comprehension of the reasons leading to Germany's collapse.

When the war was over, Ludendorff thought he had discovered the mysterious reasons which led the Kaiser to choose von Moltke as Chief of General Staff and C. in C. of the German armies in the field. He attributed the choice to 'the whisperings of those in the Kaiser's immediate entourage'. Ludendorff rambles on for quite a while about these mysterious powers, going so far as to say that 'a mysterious congress had resolved to annihilate Germany. Count von Moltke was chosen because

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he was the nephew of the victor of Sedan and was himself a spiritualist. He was, therefore, peculiarly susceptible to occult influences and instructions from the "Consecrates of Jehovah". Four years after the publication of the official documents in the 'Reichsarchiv', Ludendorff, with a view to raising three army corps, wrote as follows: 'The Ministry for War frustrated my plans so effectively because it was under the influence of occult powers who were determined to sabotage my will in the matter.' The ruin of Schlieffen's plans was likewise attributed to occult and even criminal influences. No matter how sympathetic one may be to those who believe in occultism, such ideas in this connection have to be rejected. Facts clearly conflict with such an interpretation.

Many of Ludendorff's adherents found it difficult to stomach their leader's mystical interpretation of the failure to bring about a German 'Cannae' in France. Moreover, were we to accept this fatalistic outlook, every word which has been written about the art of strategy and generalship would be null and void and subject to incalculable powers of darkness which could in a trice destroy the work of a lifetime and of a brilliantly gifted brain. All those who wished to save from disrepute Schlieffen's strategic ideas had to strive hard to find a more acceptable explanation for the failure of his 'Cannae'. They were in full sympathy with his reiterated complaint as to the paucity of intelligence displayed by the majority of German officers, as to their lethargy in the matter of serious study, as to their lack of shrewdness and their disregard of scientific training.

Delbrück's attitude towards Schlieffen was of a totally different order. This great historian of the war considered that 'all this smashing-up policy and the strategy of annihilation of the foe' was based on too narrow a concept in regard to the history of warfare. Also he was of opinion that the German General Staff had not fully understood Clausewitz. In Delbrück's estimation, Clausewitz was by no means an unconditional advocate of a war of annihilation. On the contrary, Clausewitz was a champion of the doctrine that there are two elementary types of warfare. From a casual remark made by Clausewitz, Delbrück draws the conclusion that the great master of the science of war meant to revise his work in such a way as to introduce two alternative ways of conducting war. It is amusing to note in passing that, while the military caste was unflagging in its jokes at the expense of the socialists who looked upon every word Marx ever wrote as though it were gospel truth, they themselves placed Clausewitz

on a pedestal and swallowed his doctrine entire as though it were sacrosanct. Perhaps it was for this reason that Delbrück, when arguing the matter with the militarists, attached great value to having 'the real Clausewitz' on his side. But the military, ever since 1878, definitely rejected Delbrück's interpretation of their idol.

Be this as it may, Delbrück's rebukes were sound in so far as he accused the General Staff of bias in their training — at least since the Anglo-German antagonism had been set going. In his interesting and topical article entitled *The Elementary Strategy of the World War*, which was published in 1921 by the *Prussian Annals*, he writes: 'General Kuhl will have nothing to do with my criticisms. He says that had we foreseen the consequences of the blockade and the duration of the war, both of which constituted a menace to us, we should have put every ounce of our strength into bringing affairs to a head. "Agreed, if such a thing had been possible. But if such an effort were out of the question, what then?"'

Delbrück goes on to say that this effort was impossible of achievement. Undoubtedly a swift decision might have been gained over France. But once having dealt drastically with France, what was next to be undertaken? Delbrück implies that he was convinced in advance that the United States would come to France's relief and possessed the necessary means for preventing a crushing defeat of France. From these data Delbrück deduces the course of events should a great German victory have taken place on French soil. 'There is no doubt about the fact that Great Britain would immediately have introduced universal military service and the United States would have entered the war then and there . . . Though the Americans were by no means set upon the total defeat of the Central Powers, they would never have permitted Germany in any circumstances to win the war. The United States would have set to with a will and have put a hundred million citizens to the task of preventing such a catastrophe. The French would have withdrawn behind the Loire and, if necessary, behind the Garonne; but they would have continued to fight until succour arrived. Or, another possibility was that the French would have made peace — like the peace of Tilsit in Napoleonic times — with the intention of resuming the combat after an interlude of, let us say, a year or two in order to give time for the gigantic overseas armies to land and come to her assistance. Thus a triumphal march on Napoleonic lines would in any event have turned into stabilized warfare. This is what counts.'

As a matter of historical fact, Delbrück hit the nail on the head. Yet there were very few who shared Delbrück's, Beelke's, or Ziekursch's point of view. True, the navy seemed to understand the problem better than did the army. Meurer tells us that the issue of the war, an extremely sad business for Germany, incited him to write his book on the history of naval warfare. In 1925, Rear-Admiral Michelsen declared that those who believed in the possibility of a swift decision of the war in France during 1914 had either not studied the facts or had not grasped the significance of naval warfare.

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About a year later, a memorandum of topical interest was circulated among a group of German naval officers. The author was Rear-Admiral Wolfgang Wegener. This memorandum caused much more of a stir than had at first been anticipated. In 1929 it was adapted to public needs and was issued in the form of a booklet entitled *Naval Strategy and the World War*. It is highly probable that if the German authorities had known that in ten years' time another war against Great Britain would be raging, this booklet would never have seen publication. Yet if it had been studied by English, Danish, and Norwegian experts, these countries might have taken adequate measures beforehand and made appropriate preparations. Anyway, they would not have been taken so completely off their guard in April 1940. The brochure was ably written and gave an admirable presentation of German naval policy during the first World War which, it says, was based on concepts only applicable to land armies. The English had excellent reasons for refusing to take the offensive. The first essential was for Germany to control Denmark and Norway. Only by succeeding in this could Germany procure a valuable seaboard and satisfactory strategical bases from whence she could fight for the possession of overseas trade routes.

Wegener pointed out that Germany was unaware that the war was a naval one. Germany, like Napoleon, aimed at defeating Great Britain from the land. But we have to recognize that there is a difference between Napoleon and the Germany of 1914, for the former had an inadequate navy, whereas Germany was well equipped in this arm. The German army leaders should, therefore, have seen to it that 'the navy was elevated to an important place so that the naval as well as the military arm could

operate'. Looked at from the point of view of total war, 'Denmark and Norway were the pivots upon which the whole campaign turned'. The problem as to where the necessary troops were to be drawn from was by no means an insoluble one, and it would undoubtedly have been solved had the urgency of the situation been sufficiently appreciated.



The ideas concerning present-day naval warfare spring from the old-time navy, just as the ideas of present-day land armies were the progeny of the old Reichswehr. The creator and organizer of the modern German army was General von Seeckt who died in December 1936. He drew the finest lessons from the first World War so far as land armies were concerned. If we are to trace the initial triumphs of the second World War to any particular personage we should have to place General von Seeckt at the top of the list.

Seeckt among other of his compatriots was firmly convinced that the experiences of the first World War amply substantiated the demand that a swift decision was imperative. The Commander-in-Chief had, therefore, to study minutely this form of strategy. Of course, in principle, such study was by no means wrong. Should a land war be the order of the day, German generals are not likely to jettison the teachings of Clausewitz and his disciples Moltke, Schlieffen and others without detriment to themselves. Again, when considering the present war, we have to ask ourselves the question: 'What exactly did this strategy aim at producing?' A restitution of the 1914 frontiers? This aim could probably have been secured through diplomatic channels. Or was the strategy aimed at 'absolute hegemony over the whole of Europe'? Had that been the objective, an entanglement with Great Britain would have doubtless been unavoidable. Nevertheless, General von Kuhl seems to have believed, even with the outcome of the last World War before his eyes, that the whole problem could be solved by a crushing German victory over France. Kuhl does not appear to be an isolated case, but I doubt very much whether von Seeckt would have shared his colleague's views. Von Seeckt's political and military publications make it quite plain that he realized to the full the reasons for Napoleon's failure. In his book, *Thoughts of a Soldier*, von Seeckt shows that for the duration of the last War Germany resembled a besieged fortress from which sorties alone could be made from time to time so as

to prevent its falling into enemy hands. Since the means for procuring a 'smashing victory' became scarcer and scarcer, Germany's one remaining hope was to prepare her enemy for peace by as tough a resistance as she was able to put up.

It is evident that while the war lasted von Seeckt clearly understood that 'tough resistance' in itself was not enough but, 'in addition, a wise restriction in Germany's war aims was needed in order to secure peace'. In this connection there is a passage from his private correspondence which is of interest. It was written in October 1915, when he was still fairly optimistic as to the outcome. 'Most of our people are in a confused state of mind. But the most dangerous principle which is haunting them is that our essential aim must be a guarantee to ourselves and the coming generations of an honourable peace . . . etc., and to avoid allowing them to dare . . . and so on — the old tune!' Although the overwhelming majority of the military caste held opposing views, von Seeckt himself deemed that it would be disastrous should such a way of thinking prevail. 'The result of such an idea were it to be put into practice would be the construction of a trench all round the Reich. Not an alluring prospect!' In a letter under date January 1st, 1917, he gave vent to his thoughts freely, saying that the German war aims should take the form of 'a restriction of armaments, and as it is so pleasantly expressed in the libretto of *The Magic Flute*. "joyfully and cheerfully to march forward into a better land".' Von Seeckt, though not as thoroughgoing a democrat as his friend Gröner who was a south German, was an ardent advocate of amendments in the Prussian electoral system in 1915. He never agreed in any shape or form to restrictions being placed on freedom of thought, on the church, on teaching, art, speech, and the press. He was not a cosmopolitan but he drew the line at national autocracy in the realm of art, saying: 'In my heart I must make an exception. The arts must remain unscathed. I cannot help it if these are my convictions.' He esteemed Rathenau greatly and thought also very highly of Bernard Shaw\* and other English authors, reading their works even in the thick of the conflict. 'We do not wish to become spiritually impoverished because of the war,' he wrote from the front.

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Even as war-time measures, von Seeckt disliked any form of public

coercion. 'Do not prohibit the individual from taking part in enterprises; do not suppress personalities who are advocating state socialism', he warned his compatriots in 1915. A state where citizens could work in the fullest freedom was and remained throughout his ideal. 'The greater the political liberty an individual enjoys, the more readily will he play his part well for the sake of the commonwealth,' von Seeckt wrote in 1929. While considering his experience during the first World War, he said frankly that it was inadmissible for any country to wage a war which had not popular support. In 1923 he fought as fiercely against the radicals of the left as he did against the socialists of the right. Once he had got himself out of the crisis which his attitude entailed, he relinquished all his official powers and entrusted them to the social democrat Ebert, who was President of the Second Reich at the time. This gesture was due to his 'enlightened militarism', as a scientific paper run by the social democrats put it. German nationalists, and more especially the National Socialists, were vehemently attacking the leadership of the Reichswehr at that time, and we cannot blame them. Gröner, von Seeckt, Schleicher, Hammerstein, and others were nicknamed 'November Generals'. This was a hint that they had met the November revolution half-way. At the same time, and among the same gentry, there was a good deal of resentment felt at von Seeckt's withdrawal from his high functions. He could afford to do so 'because he possessed inherited estates . . .' The *Völkischer Beobachter* observed in 1923 that unfortunately among the officers of the German army von Seeckt was looked upon as a jingo. The right benchers could not forgive him for not having formed a militarist dictatorship while he was at the zenith of his power in 1923. But von Seeckt and many other officers were in agreement that such a regime would be unsuitable at that time if Germany was to be renovated and set up as a nation again. They held that solely by a gradual and progressive democratic system could Germany's position in the world be restored.

On November 4th, 1923, von Seeckt spoke his mind as follows: 'Ever since I have held my present position, I have maintained that Germany cannot be satisfactorily restored to her former eminence by the action of extremists, either supported from outside or inside our realm, nor by people holding right or left views. Germany's future continuance depends upon stern and sober work on her part alone.' The pan-Germans and other radicals of the right under the leadership of Heinrich Class

relied upon the hypothesis he had launched in 1912. He toyed with the idea of exterminating the social democrats and their ever-growing influence, of annihilating the liberals together with the national liberals of the very moderate Stresemann persuasion. In his estimation, a dictatorship of the right-wing elements could have been set up (as early as 1912 this was known by the name of 'national dictatorship') either after a victorious war or during the chaos created by defeat. In conformity with these ideas, the pan-Germans and other right wing radicals would certainly not be the men to smother chaos after a lost war. When dealing with what happened in 1923, Hitler writes in *Mein Kampf*: 'A genuine national regime required at that time a condition of trouble and unrest.' But von Seeckt and many officers meant something totally different from Hitler when they spoke of a 'genuinely nationalist regime'. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler complains bitterly that 'Marxism has found a powerful prop from the authoritative position of certain men in the Reichswehr'.

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Reichswehr politics were very complicated. It was impossible to introduce a plain formula, especially seeing that there existed a multiplicity of trends. Heated discussions took place over two irreconcilable tendencies, these discussions flaring up from time to time. The uppermost questions were: Shall we settle down to the new regime? or, Shall we restore the monarchy? The discussions went on till well into 1932 when Hans Brauweiler published a book dealing with Gröner, Schleicher and Seeckt, *Generals in the German Republic*. Braunweiler was at the time closely associated with the Ministry for the Reichswehr. He writes concerning the problems: 'These perennial conflicts between the spokesmen of the traditional army and the men who were now responsible for the trends of opinion in the Reichswehr still hinged upon the same fundamental questions.' A detailed description of such topical questions is far beyond the scope of this book, but I can allude to the fact that even those who supported the new regime aimed at shifting the weight of responsible posts on to the shoulders of more or less right-wing supporters. We have to admit, however, that this tilting of the scales had nothing to do with the National Socialists. The transfer of power in the Reichswehr was not even a conservative move of the von Papen or Hugenburg trend. With the utmost courage and tenacity, Gröner struggled against all opponents

up to the last to maintain the constitutional regime intact. Von Seeckt's political attitude of mind was never very clear, but we can say this of him: that by word and deed as well as by the fact that he was a member of the Stresemann group which went under the name of the German People's Party (National Liberals) he wished to keep to the constitutional form of government and to raise the status of the upper middle class. This was quite enough to permit of the left wing radicals calling him a 'reactionary'. The National German Party on the one hand and the National Socialists on the other considered him to be one of the pillars of the Weimar Republic and of the Marxist system.

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General Seeckt was not exactly a democrat, yet he was probably more in sympathy with the republic than he himself was aware. He most certainly had no admiration for dictatorship or the totalitarian state. 'Of course', he remarked, 'the state must be given the option of passing special laws in special circumstances, but such exceptional legislation must not become permanent even when masked by deceptive palliatives. It is a sign of weak statesmanship when emergency laws have to be passed. The struggle for higher wages is a natural phenomenon of social life, and this struggle cannot be suppressed out of hand without imperilling the state structure.' That is one instance of the general outlook of von Seeckt. On principle he recognized the right of the workers to form trades unions if and when they wished. But he was very averse to the arts and graces connected with life at court, to state controlled education, to suppression of freedom in the minds of men. All these curtailments of liberty would 'in the end lead to stagnation and explosion'. Since he always proved himself to be a man of a practical way of thinking and since he had excellent training in the field of history we may take it that he had a profound aversion to mysticism and the worship of 'the leader'. 'Good luck may protect us from the disastrous results of a political infant prodigy,' he exclaimed in his book *The Future of the Reich*, published in 1929. Nor did von Seeckt ever accept the current notion that 'Germany was stabbed in the back while her men were still fighting in 1918'. As a matter of fact, this notion found fewer men in the army to support it than is generally supposed.

It can be deduced from von Seeckt's works that the majority of his fore-

bears were academically minded, that they were theologians rather than men of war. His father, certainly, took an interest in politics, but the estrangement between Ludendorff and von Seeckt which grew ever more apparent as the war continued was not solely due to professional jealousy. Baron Rabenau wrote a book entitled *Hans von Seeckt, and about my Life from 1866 to 1917*. Herein he confides to his readers that 'Ludendorff quite unconsciously felt somewhat uncomfortable in the presence of von Seeckt's superior abilities'. Seeing that Ludendorff and von Seeckt held totally antagonistic outlooks on the world, the estrangement between them is not to be wondered at.



Long before the United States had decided to enter the war, von Seeckt predicted that if America did make up her mind she would indubitably come in on the side of Germany's adversaries. He objected to the incorporation into the German Reich of territories on the eastern front, for he considered that such an act would inevitably alienate the whole world. He wished to keep the door open to an eventual understanding between Germany and Russia. In his *Thoughts of a Soldier* it is rather remarkable to find him writing: 'If the war had ended in a *status quo ante*, this would have meant a victory for German arms.' Men such as Ludendorff were incapable of understanding the ideas von Seeckt put forth and the new military concepts he had in mind.

During the first World War, von Seeckt had set about changing the static war into one of movement by the introduction of new tactical methods. Indeed, the corps he commanded had succeeded as early as January 1915 in penetrating deeply the French lines although by that time along the whole fighting front static warfare was well established. General Beck, an artillery officer, on the occasion of von Seeckt's seventieth birthday, declared that 'so far as the history of recent warfare is concerned, all the important achievements are closely linked up with this general's personality'. Beck was right. But it was only when the first World War was a thing of the past that von Seeckt was given his great opportunity to put into practice the ideas he had cherished for so long. He organized and gave shape to the Reichswehr.

'The rebuilding of the German army went on well while the experiences and teachings of the first World War were still fresh in the memory of

mankind', wrote von Seeckt, 'and could be put to a practical use.' This rebuilding was no easy task. 'Every army organization is inclined to be conservative,' he observed, thus bringing himself into line with Fuller. Church and army are the most conservative bodies imaginable. A considerable number of military gentlemen looked askance at von Seeckt's innovations and his complete abandonment of all the traditions and the organization of the erstwhile Imperial army. Von Seeckt poured out his troubles in this matter when he published his book *The Reichswehr* in 1933. 'Many who had devoted time and energy to the old army organization found it impossible to raise a finger to reconstitute the new because they could not break away from tradition and the outworn ideas which had nurtured them. Open enmity could have been dealt with more easily than this latent animosity. What a wall of prejudice, priggishness, lack of comprehension, and stupidity we had to battle against in the early days of Reichswehr organization!'

Out of a strength of forty thousand officers at the beginning of the war there remained thirty-six thousand, mostly crocks. But what remained of them were for the most part advocates of resuscitating the fundamental principles of the old Imperial army. Four thousand of these old-time officers were admitted into the new army, but most of them were still striving to get back to pre-war traditions. They fought vigorously against von Seeckt's new ideas as if they were out to compensate themselves, somewhat belatedly, for the neglectful treatment and deficiencies of William II's armies, ascribing its failure to the fact that universal military service had not been adequately utilized. But von Seeckt had definitely broken with tradition and was eagerly on the look out for new forms of waging war.



The National Socialists and the German Nationalists set out in their programme of 1920 the demand for the abolition of the mercenary army and the reintroduction of universal military service. The socialists, though they were fully aware that a professional army would only serve to complicate the democratic issues, agreed to abandon their slogan of 'no regular army but a people-in-arms'. They considered that tank warfare and, generally speaking, the mechanization and motorization of the army had rendered their previous conceptions obsolete. All forms of technical

development were requiring manifold specializations in every realm of industry. So, too, was it with the army. The professional soldier was once again in demand, for a lengthy period of training in the technical aspect of warfare had become essential, even if a nation is to prepare itself only for a war of defence. On the whole, our German socialists clearly recognized this fact and took it to heart. Still, Paul Levi, a lawyer and member of the Reichstag, rather exaggerates when he declares that 'the excellent Germany army of a hundred thousand professional soldiers together with Germany's industrial capacity forms the strongest military power in Europe'. Yet even at the date when he uttered these words the value of the new German army was indisputable. Von Seeckt's notions for the reorganization of the army were called 'truly revolutionary ideas by an expert for waging war'. The pith and marrow of von Seeckt's and his followers' intentions lay in the thesis that, 'since the quality of the materials to be used in making war must be raised to the highest degree, so the quality of the soldier who is expected to use this material must likewise be raised'. The improvement of the quality of the individual soldier 'can only take place through education, so that he is capable of shouldering the responsibilities which modern warfare demands. It will never be achieved by the mere drilling of recruits'. The conclusion to which von Seeckt came after studying various expressions of opinion was that the pre-war type of armies had become a thing of the past, and that the arming of the people had to be built up on completely new foundations. In his *Principles of Modern Defence of the Country* he made the sensational statement that a peace-time strength of about 200,000 men was all that Germany required. He did not insist that this was the exact number, but what he did emphasize was the fact that a relatively small army during days of peace was all that was necessary since it would have to consist of men who would be willing and able to serve for a long period. 'The smaller the army, the easier it is to provision it,' he writes. 'Then we can see to it that the men are thoroughly well equipped, whereas if we try to maintain an army of millions of soldiers, we are embarking on the impossible.' A large army is undoubtedly an asset in certain cases, but the size of armies has very little to do with the decisive issue of war. He who should fancy that the modern methods of waging war could be carried out by a mere two hundred thousand men would be an ass. Modern warfare reckoned on the use of millions of soldiers, but these

picked men would be used quite differently. Highly qualified and specialized troops, fully mechanized and motorized, would have to be placed in the front line instead of the kind of soldiers produced by our former universal military service, men who had received a relatively short period of training. Yet conscription of all available manpower would be needed should actual warfare break out. The way in which the new army was to be built up had naturally to be based on military expediency. But both psychological and political considerations must play their due part. . . .



Since von Seeckt and his adherents refused to lend themselves to the idea of a totalitarian state, they had to act warily so that their work on army reform could run smoothly and avoid coming into conflict with the state control of the entire nation. The organizers of the new army put themselves about to steer clear of any suggestion of compulsion. Were it for military reasons alone they felt that any general form of compulsion would be unwise. The atmosphere such compulsion would inevitably create would react unfavourably on the picked troops whose attitude of mind counted for so much in the prosecution of any war, and also it was bound to have a pernicious influence on the new tactics they were evolving. Modern strategy must aim at achieving a decision by mobile, high-class, operative forces before great masses of troops are set going against them. These are the merest outlines of von Seeckt's teachings. To-day we see once more the flower of young men of all nations lying dead on the battlefields of Europe. Among these nations is the once proud France where there has been uninterrupted universal military service for generations. In his *Thoughts of a Soldier*, von Seeckt remarks: 'In the next war the state which is only able to move its war machinery slowly will find itself in a precarious if not in a hopeless position. For a people's army cannot be concentrated swiftly enough to hold the enemy in check, especially if the invading enemy is both strong and mobile.'

In 1919, the victorious Allies found it difficult to come to an agreement as to what shape Germany's army organization should assume in order to prevent a recrudescence of military power. Fuller, after serious study of the latter phases of the first World War and the mechanization of warfare, sympathized with von Seeckt's apprehensions as to the condition

of affairs. In 1932 he wrote that the victorious allied powers by a special clause in the Treaty of Versailles compelled Germany to abandon universal military service and to have only a small professional army. But Germany made the best use of these restrictions by employing them as a kind of springboard for launching her future military strength. France, on the other hand, by her insistence on retaining her traditional regular army at its fullest strength, merely emasculated herself, from the military point of view.

Neither had Fuller any illusion of waging war with only a handful of picked troops. He, like von Seeckt, was aware that mass-armies were no longer capable of coping with highly mechanized troops. The army authorities' chief concern was, therefore, to be the production of mobile and well trained specialized troops. Troops such as he contemplated could not be placed in the front line with only a relatively short period of training behind them, whereas troops destined for the second or the third line could be improvised within a short time in case of emergency. This was all the more possible of achievement if youths in the adolescent stage of growth had been given good physical drill, by going in for sports and such-like activities. This would pave the way for their more intensive training as soldiers. Fuller, von Seeckt, and others were of one mind on the subject. In 1930, when Germany had been granted full liberty to arm herself as she saw fit, von Seeckt was satisfied with a strength of 200,000 men. This leads one to believe that in 1919, when the Treaty of Versailles was ratified, he already had in mind a force of 200,000 men, and was meanwhile ready to begin the reorganization of the German army with a 100,000 men. Anyhow, the restrictions imposed on the size of the German army after the war had an unexpected effect, for instead of impeding the work of reform it encouraged those engaged on it to work out new tactical methods. In all probability von Seeckt would have demanded in due course a larger number of soldiers to be enrolled in his *élite* troops, but most certainly not at the cost of their quality. He was never in doubt that with Germany's excellent technical productive power she would be able when the time came to expand the framework of such an army of picked men very considerably without jeopardizing its readiness for war with its innumerable mechanical requisites. He was never tired of reiterating that modern warfare was an expensive business. The maintenance of such an

army is necessarily costly, for it has constantly to be equipped with new weapons, and as time goes on it has perpetually to be reshaped for its tasks. Naturally such a perpetual renewal of armaments had to be kept within limits both for technical, economic, and financial reasons. Von Seeckt had no intention of exceeding these limits. Just as Caprivi in his day had to take the economic factors into account, so did von Seeckt in a later epoch realize that Germany had to rely on exports and, therefore, on world commerce for her support. Consequently it was not admissible in peace-time to strain Germany's economic life so that its functioning might become impaired. That would merely endanger Germany's position in relation to international economy. At all costs such a peril must be prevented. It never entered von Seeckt's mind, nor that of his adherents, not to mention all sensible persons throughout Germany, to ask themselves at that time whether insufficient productive ability and competition in the world markets could be compensated by drastic military measures, or whether 'living space' economy could take the place of world economy — which in the long run depended upon the power of the sword and would, in the end, lead to an invasion of Russia. But such concepts did occupy the brains of certain Germans later on.



In accordance with his ideas of military, political, and economic issues, von Seeckt would find himself confronted with relatively limited tasks should war break out and with relatively few enemies to contend with. He went out of his way to come to friendly relations with Soviet Russia, and this not only on account of economic interests and foreign affairs but also on the ground of the military situation. It has to be remembered that he and his colleagues attributed the failure of the 'Cannae' in France in the previous war to the fact that Germany had to wage war simultaneously on two fronts. Taking things by and large, von Seeckt's ideas did not need so comprehensive a programme as did that of the National Socialists who from the outset of their regime designed to molest France and Russia. Also by their autarchic aspirations they intensified the tension already existing between Germany and the rest of the world.

Just as Imperial Germany had been constrained to adopt a policy of protective tariffs, so the autarchic policy of post-war Germany was prompted by nationalistic and war-economic considerations set afoot by

the agrarians and National Socialists. Since 1929, the battle for or against autarchy has raged furiously. From experience gathered during the war, the adversaries of autarchy were even more antagonistic to the arguments in its favour should war come than were their predecessors in Caprivi's time to the imposition of the 1902 tariff. In a noteworthy discussion anent this policy of autarchy, Dr. Luther, an intimate colleague of the president of the Reichstag, asked the question: 'Does Germany wish for a repetition of the experiment which the World War forced on her and which ended in the Peace of Versailles? Who will be found to answer in the affirmative? And who will answer in the negative? All these discussions about autarchy become meaningless because nobody can understand why it should be considered national and patriotic to produce commodities at home which will cost more than those which can easily be bought cheaper from foreign lands. In other words, if Germany is contemplating once more engaging in mortal combat with Great Britain, she is heading for disaster. But if Germany is aiming at nothing of the kind, then why all these wordy discussions about autarchy?' And Dr. Hans Gestrich declares that it is a sad thing to hear certain groups interested in industry or trade 'besmirching such unimpeachable ideas as those of the Fatherland, nationalism, and patriotism for the sake of material gains'.

In my book, *Germany and the Soviet Union*, I pose the question as to why in the first instance the National Socialists wished for an alliance with Great Britain. Was it not prompted by the desire to secure the supply of raw materials and food in case of war against Russia — which was looked upon as a foregone conclusion? Yet such moves in the diplomatic field are contradictory with what the National Socialists urged as a motive for their autarchic policy when they were constantly vociferating their need for a larger army in defence of the country. From a close study of the literature issued by the National Socialist press, we gather that its fight against international economics is based on identical grounds as was that of the grand old agrarians of former times. It is not by chance that the descendants of these same agrarians threw in their lot with the National Socialists. Seeing these manifold contradictions in National Socialist policy, it seemed a waste of a time for statisticians to make elaborate researches into the reasons why autarchy would be an ideal goal beyond Germany's power to attain. The protagonists of autarchy in Germany must know very well that the country cannot live on her own production

alone. So, making a virtue of necessity, they claimed that Germany must expand at the expense of other lands. This order of ideas is not illogical. But when the National Socialists set out to grab other nations' lands, they failed to realize that such action on their part would inevitably lead them into world war. Still, once the autarchic idea had taken root, those responsible for promoting it must have considered the possibility of war, for nobody is going to sit down calmly and see the land which provides him with food taken away from him. Indubitably there were many supporters of the autarchic regime who, while deeming it a feasible proposition, saw in it the germs of possible war. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* addressed to these folk the prophetic words: 'An autarchic blockade would multiply immeasurably the existing conflicts with which the world is faced and would therefore conjure up the danger of war from which autarchy presumes to safeguard the people.' This was written on October 8th, 1932.

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It is worthy of note that the two leading personalities in the Third Reich who dealt mainly with the economics of warfare were Major Thomas and his first collaborator, Major Beutler, who emphatically warned the Nazis about the dangers which their autarchic policy entailed. But the more manifest the warnings, the more drastically did the rulers of Germany seek to carry out their ideas. Though Thomas and Beutler, too, deemed it essential to make preparations in case of war, they persistently refused to accept the autarchic policy with its inevitable corollary of a war economy in time of peace. They considered ordinary political economy and war economy to be quite different things.

Major Beutler wrote in the *Scientific Military Review* (which in 1937 had as editor the War Minister to the Reich): 'Such war-time economic requirements are harmful to the economic health of our country and only serve to hamper our power to compete with other countries in markets abroad. They discredit us and are wrong-headed throughout.' A year earlier the same periodical declared that the soldiers were 'refusing to accept economic militarism' and that identical ideas were expressed by leading personalities. 'The task of political economy in times of peace is to provide, in competition with other nations, the people of the country with the best economic conditions possible. This happy state of affairs

can only be attained by sensible economic relations. Active enterprises are, therefore, indispensable. When we have to do with war economy thrift takes a quite secondary place.' Such were Beutler's thoughts in 1937. Another of his sayings deserves quotation. 'If political economy abjures the principle of thrift, the nation which adopts this principle will very swiftly find herself outstripped by other nations in the economic race. There will ensue a general lowering of morale even in the realm of war economy. Thus the vicious circle will be closed. From the point of view of waging war in the economic field, adequately and at the highest attainable level, it is essential that during peace-time economic life should be in a healthy and flourishing condition so that when the stresses and strains of war come, it is in a position to bear vicissitude unflinchingly.'

So saying, Beutler ranged himself alongside the writer in the 'Reichsarchiv' who said: 'A healthy peace economy harbours within itself the preliminary conditions for a healthy war economy.' Both von Seeckt and Thomas thought along the same lines. In June 1938, Thomas declared that 'those countries which showed the greatest activity in the economic field proved the most resilient in adverse circumstances and this was far from being the case with countries which had adopted the autarchic principle. Germany's economic strength lay in the fact that she had been able to adapt herself to her increasing international trade relationships'.



The struggle which the Nazis engaged in against industrial development was in close relation with their fundamental ideas about autarchy. In the early days of its power, National Socialism even endeavoured to revert to homespuns and handicrafts so as to cut loose from industrialism. This assault upon the machines was naturally of short duration. Von Schacht came into collision with his National Socialist colleagues over the question of utilizing the technical and industrial apparatus of capitalism, saying in so many words that even the strongest nation would soon collapse were it to revert from industrial production to the hand-loom and other handicrafts. He pointed out that modern armaments and industrial development were inseparable from one another. Ultimately, the National Socialists were convinced and the handicraftsmen were pushed back into industrial undertakings. They became proletarians automati-

cally, but it was only by such measures that the necessary tanks and aircraft could be produced. Women, too, who at the outset had been relegated to the home, to child-bearing, etc., were ultimately forced to go into the industrial plants. The Nazis clung tenaciously to their autarchy, but in order to make it a paying proposition they were obliged to stimulate industrialism instead of the handicrafts, as originally intended. This was natural seeing that the chief German industry, the chemical industry, is a highly mechanized and factory organization. The same applies to iron-ore and other raw materials which cannot be extracted from the earth and converted into goods by means of handicraft. And so it was throughout.

But in spite of the Nazis' best endeavours, the experts in social philosophy were not able to establish that Germany could exist without economic aid on the international scale, nor that the import trade had been reduced to any extent worth mentioning. Dr. Eicke, director of the Reich Bank, in the fourth reprint of his *Why Foreign Trade?* (1938), remarks that Germany depended for at least half her supplies of fats upon foreign imports; that her requirements as regarded milk, butter, cheese, and other dairy produce could be met only as to 66 per cent were she to rely entirely on her own capacities and refuse to import the remainder from abroad. Many figures and estimates of that day are now, of course, entirely out of date. These figures serve to show that even by occupying every country in Europe Germany is not able to satisfy her needs. Investigations such as those undertaken by Dr. Friedensburg in his articles in the (German) *Political Economist* (April 16th and 23rd, 1937) entitled 'Is it Possible to Satisfy the Petrol Requirements of Modern Warfare?' are of interest to-day when we are in the midst of a protracted war. Friedensburg estimated that petrol would be needed in very large quantities, and he thought that the fuel situation of 1918 would be repeated. At that date, every country in Europe suffered from a dearth of munitions. Friedensburg declares that just as all the fronts were frozen at that time for lack of munitions, so in a future war the armies would be in a similar case because of the absence of petrol. 'But a nation with access to oil supplies might gain an easy victory.' So far as petrol supplies are concerned, Friedensburg's anxieties were not justified in the case of the unexpected collapse of France in the present conflict, for France had plenty of this commodity when she surrendered. Still, as the war progresses,

Friedensburg may prove to be right. Take it as you may, the petrol question is of the utmost importance in modern warfare. The fierce fighting for possession of the Baku oilfields shed light on the whole problem.

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There were many in Germany who were opposed to the autarchic policy besides Majors Thomas and Beutler. This was not merely for the reasons already discussed but also because they saw clearly that autarchy was beyond Germany's capacity to attain. For one thing, as Beutler points out, agricultural production automatically decreases as war progresses. A nation can only be considered self-supporting if it is able in war-time to produce at least 40 per cent more than it does in times of peace. He further pointed out that to sacrifice human life for unattainable ends was unjustifiable, and that should 'such a thing be done, it will go to prove that the nation concerned has no leaders who, intellectually and morally, are equal to their task. No nation can stand so hard a trial'. Beutler wrote these words in May 1937.

In a highly interesting lecture delivered in February 1937, Major Thomas declared that Germany had lost the first World War because she had not taken into account the concentration of military operations and the economic war. She had underestimated the economic strength of the foe while overestimating her own strength in the economic field during war. Germany has had to pay very dearly for this mistake and it is up to her leaders to review every circumstance dispassionately and with diligence. The economic expert who has to deal with war conditions needs to know every detail of existing circumstances and to be able to establish his point of view before the government of the country. If a nation has come of age, it has every right to be informed truthfully about this and anything else which may arise from time to time. When evil befalls it, such a nation will hold its own if it is given the reasons for its having to shed its blood. In this connection, everybody should be warned by what happened in the last Great War. Food supplies should be given specially careful consideration if disaster is to be avoided. 'In 1916-17 we Germans had already lost the war when we went through our "turnip winter"'. Inexcusable sins of omission and commission would be committed should we again neglect to attend to the dependence of our people on outside help for their food supplies.'

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Competent persons engaged in the study of Germany's war economy would not have given such candid expression to their opinions had they felt that their Führer's endeavours to come to an agreement with Britain would be crowned with success. The prospects for such a fulfilment were rather better in 1935 when the Anglo-German naval treaty had been satisfactorily settled. By this treaty Germany had to limit the navy to 35 per cent of that of England. If there was any sacrifice it was on the part of Great Britain and not Germany. In the first place the United Kingdom agreed to the Germans increasing their naval armaments up to this percentage; in the second place Germany, seeing her commitments in respect of her army and air force, could not hope to build up her naval strength quickly. Churchill, criticising the agreement, prophesied on May 15th, 1936, that on a day to come Germany would declare that the weather had changed and that the restrictions imposed on her navy of one-third that of Great Britain no longer applied. On April 28th, 1939, Hitler verified this prediction to the full.

What Churchill wrote and said about German armament at the time was declared to be a gross exaggeration by certain people. Yet when the German Führer announced on September 1st, 1939, that he had spent nine thousand million marks on armaments during his leadership, the British Commonwealth realized how 'dreadfully true' had been the warnings of their great statesman. Another utterance of Churchill's is worth mentioning. He declared that if Germany did not sooner or later restrict her fabulous expenditure on armaments she would inevitably embark on a desperate enterprise.

Many Germans, too, felt worried about the fantastic expenditure on armaments which was in progress. In May 1935, Dr. Dreyse, vice-president of the Reich Bank, tried to make it clear that 'forging arms at the risk of financial catastrophe was a dunderheaded thing to do, since the forces needed for the manipulation of the arms were becoming physically exhausted'. The president of the Reich Bank, von Schacht, said in his famous Königsberg speech that if any man worth his salt should say 'only old aunts will be aghast at such an outlay and who on earth will pay for it all', he himself would have to run the risk of being called 'an old aunt', since the task of meeting these manifold expenses gave him a headache and meant a lot of hard thinking.

Von Seeckt and others among his adherents imperturbably professed

it as their opinion that the accumulation of vast stores of arms was of dubious value, since by the time they were needed they would be antiquated. He therefore refused to be a party to such extravagance for economic and financial reasons as well as technical ones — for arms of any kind grow obsolete very swiftly. This point of view conformed with the British and American methods of economic mobilization. These two countries aimed at keeping relatively small reserves of arms while making preparations for mass-production in case of need. They maintained the closest contacts with their industrialists and technicians. But it goes without saying that none of this made the slightest impression on the National Socialists who gaily went on with their prodigious schemes of arming the nation. Drs. Dreyse and Schacht were not merely bothered about the financial aspects of the whole business, but they likewise felt the task imposed upon them to be altogether too vast an undertaking and would in the end lead the Nazi regime to unexpected consequences.



Shortly before the first World War the Secretary of the Treasury was called in to help restrain Tirpitz in his demands for new expenditure on naval equipment seeing that relations with Great Britain were strained at the time in consequence. Nowadays Germany knows very accurately what war with the island realm means. Schacht, Dreyse, and others were well aware that the pretentious programme of the National Socialists would render any agreement with Great Britain impossible. And they were equally aware that victory over the British Empire was out of the question. Only if a victory over the British Isles was an accomplished fact would they at a future date be able to say: 'There was no hole made in our Bank. Armaments were necessary. Let the enemy pay.' After their experiences at the close of the first World War the Germans knew what paying for a war meant, and it needed no 'old aunts' to tell them what miseries a lost war brought in its train.

In a publication issued during 1938, *Defence Geography of the Oceans*, by Commander Heye, we read: 'Europe can create a friendly attitude towards herself on the part of America only by cultivating peaceful economic and cultural relations but never if she tries to bring pressure to bear by the use of the military arm.' Which, being interpreted, could only signify that should Germany again challenge Great Britain to a life and death

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struggle, her generals would once again be faced by unrealizable tasks.

Nevertheless, the men who were expelled from the German army, from financial positions, or from the foreign office in February 1938, just before the annexation of Austria, all those who had warned the Nazis of what was impending, seemed on the face of it to be in the wrong, for everything went as on well-oiled wheels. Yet it is certain that the Generals Blomberg, Fritsch and others who at the time were shouldered into the background already saw on the horizon the thunder-clouds of a new world war in spite of Hitler's bloodless victories. They realized that an absolute German hegemony over the whole extent of Europe was impossible of achievement, nor did they see how the Third Reich could conquer immense expanses of Russian territory, nor how colonies were to be won while fostering Japan's and Mussolini's anti-British policy and endeavouring to bring about an alliance with Great Britain all at the same time. Yet strange as it may seem to-day, that was precisely what the Nazis' foreign policy was in those hectic days. It is not difficult to understand why the man in the street sensed the approach of a collapse of the Nazi regime and a renewal of the Entente.



The fear of a blockade was still in mind, and the people were alarmed lest another defeat would bring about the same conditions. In 1938, Lieutenant-General Marx discussed this problem in a little, though valuable, brochure. He bitterly opposed the legendary nature of the reason for Germany's collapse in 1918 and went all out to attack the theory that Germany's propaganda had been at fault. Such notions, he maintained, were put into circulation so that the true reasons of Germany's collapse might be veiled from the general public. Germany could not win the first World War because it was a war which was waged to achieve the impossible. The reasons put into circulation were not only misleading but constituted a real menace in case of a future war. It was not possible to overcome the stranglehold of a blockade. 'The lack of albumens, fats, and carbohydrates cannot be substituted by pleasant words!'

It is not surprising that in German military circles stress was laid on the need for bringing any war to a swift conclusion. What von Schlieffen said and wrote in his day is as valid now as it was then, if not even more to the point. Metzsch said much the same thing in the summer of 1939:

'We can try our luck by dealing a fiercer blow but not by taking a deep breath. Never again must we give our foes an opportunity of exhausting our striking power first and then going on to break us down by their overwhelming and persistent economic warfare.' He went on to say that his words did not imply that the next war would 'certainly' be a short one. All he meant was that Germany must strive with all her power to make it as swift as possible, for by such methods she stood the only chance of being successful. General Metzsch warned his compatriots that they must not rely on technical improvements to bring about a miracle.

In February 1939, Metzsch delivered two interesting lectures at Frankfurt-am-Main. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* reported him as saying among other things that 'every war is a leap into the void even if it is conducted in the most favourable circumstances imaginable. Any martial conflict in which Germany has vital interests will cast its shadow over the whole terrestrial globe. Technique has altered conceptions as to space, so that it is impossible beforehand to estimate the forces on or directly behind the frontier which are pitted against one another. What counts is what one or the other belligerent can rely on as to supplies from all over the world'.



Persons of critical intelligence, after the experiences of the last Great War, no longer believed in a war of short duration. They placed their confidence in the new army and its new tactics on the one hand, and on the well-known weakness of France on the other. Still, it would seem from subsequent events that there were quite a number of Germans who believed in a war which would soon be over. Otherwise it seems incomprehensible that the warnings of Thomas and his fellow thinkers should have passed unheeded, for these personalities were unflagging in their efforts to remind the Germans that they had only recently suffered a grave disappointment in the matter of achieving a speedy decision in warfare. It may be that the incurable optimists counted on the Luftwaffe quickly to decide the issue even in respect of Great Britain. Though the striking power of the German air force was highly rated, spokesmen of the German army and navy never fostered the idea of a swift victory. Naturally the question was frequently discussed as to how far the Luftwaffe could attain superiority over or act as substitute for a navy. In general it was admitted that either of these eventualities was possible but to a limited extent.

Another current belief was that the war-plane was not suitable for independent action over the wide expanses of the oceans since it needed strong support from the navy and good bases. But in dealing with countries not so far away the airplane might be of advantage. In this connection we may recall Rear-Admiral Massmann's words which appeared in an article in the periodical *Nauticus* (1939): 'If the Luftwaffe cannot in the course of its first offensives bring the enemy to book, then we cannot count on a short war with any certainty, but rather we shall have to make up our minds to face a protracted struggle.' He was obviously thinking of his country in relation to a war with Great Britain.

Since despite diplomatic and warlike threats from the totalitarian states the British lion seemed likely to offer no vigorous resistance to submitting to having its hair plucked out by the handful, the Germans deduced that this lion had been deprived of its strength and its sharp claws. But Count Pückler, in his book *How Strong is Britain?*, showed convincingly that the British lion is as strong as ever it was. Other Germans, too, warned their compatriots not to underestimate the strength of the British Empire. Though the older generation had had a taste of Great Britain's might, the younger generation knew only what it was told — that the British were effete and the Empire in a state of decay. It is an extraordinary psychological fact that whenever Germany has a mind to wage war on Great Britain, the Germans find it impossible not to start their 'stupid sneering at the English'. This ignorant and idiotic attitude of mind began again to show itself in 1938.

In March 1939, immediately after Germany had broken the Munich agreement by invading Czechoslovakia, Churchill wrote that all over Great Britain a tremendous change of ideas and sentiments had swept through the land and throughout the Dominions. Churchill was bothered about the small military equipment Britain possessed in comparison with that of Germany, though he consoled himself with the thought that Germany's naval strength was relatively small. This brought some comfort to a man who thought in terms of continents and of centuries. He by no means underestimated the Luftwaffe, but was convinced that Great Britain's air fleet was of the finest quality in spite of being enormously inferior in numbers to that which the Germans could put into the air. He admitted even before the actual outbreak of hostilities that the English had lost a number of battles on the European continent; but, he continued:

'If the Nazi dictator had the time to study English history he would see that on more than one famous occasion this island has lost great military advantages in Europe by its intense reluctance to be involved in continental struggles, and yet in the end had led the way to victory.'

Churchill foresaw clearly the bitter times that lay ahead, just as he had observed the renaissance of a powerful German military power, the growth of National Socialism and its preposterous aims. It is possible that he had forebodings of the catastrophe which was to befall France, for he knew only too well how inadequately she was prepared for war. Towards the close of 1935 he urged André Maurois to discontinue the writing of novels and biographies and devote all his energies to the writing of articles describing the parlous condition of the French air force — which had been so good in the previous Great War. Alas, Maurois failed to write those articles.



But the question of armaments was not restricted to aviation. There were also tanks and the composition of the shock troops whose task was to form the modern machinery wherewith to put these weapons to the best use in modern warfare. As early as 1928, a French journal stated that every act undertaken by France seemed to look as though she meant to return to the days of Versailles, to the days of 1914, and to go off to sleep. Germany, on the contrary, under pressure of the Treaty of Versailles felt compelled to modernize her military methods and equipment. An astute Frenchman pertinently remarked that this time there would be no 'miracle of the Marne' for the man who was caught sleeping. Still France continued not only to sleep, but to snore so resoundingly that the echo of her snores reached Germany. The Rhineland, even while Germany was very poorly equipped, was occupied. Yet not every Frenchman was indulging in slumber, and among those on the alert was Charles de Gaulle.

He was acutely aware that the war to come would not be a static one or one of siege operations. He was far from denying the usefulness of fortresses, but he warned his countrymen not to place their whole faith in them. Nobody, he pointed out, could know in advance what the effect of modern offensive weapons would be on either the fortresses or their garrisons. He foresaw the possibility of outflanking a fortress.

Above all else, he laid stress on the fact that the north of France — a peculiarly sensitive region — was not fortified at all and that what fortifications there were would prove utterly inefficient. De Gaulle at that time was a lieutenant-colonel and was not greatly heeded. He felt sure that the Germans would break through precisely at this vulnerable spot, for there the whole geographical layout of the land offered the Germans the finest of military opportunities. This gap in France's defences had been her weak spot for centuries. In 1870, disaster and a shameful defeat took this path. On this same road, one-third of the youth of France went to its death in the last Great War. De Gaulle took it for granted that the Germans would make use of the same route again in a fresh war. He asked, rather rhetorically: 'Do not all the flat roads of Westphalia and Flanders, not to mention the innumerable canals of the Ruhr region and the Low Countries, point directly to Antwerp and Calais? From these vantage points England can be watched. Do you fancy that the Germans when they strike at the heart of France will ignore this shortest and easiest way to her goal?' He continued by showing that all depended upon how long Belgium could hold out against the menace of the advancing Germans. Though in the first World War Belgium heroically decided to throw in her lot with the Allies, there was no earthly reason to suppose that if a second conflagration took place she would again act as a sort of advance guard for the French peoples. De Gaulle did not mince matters when he declared: 'If we are to avert the dangers which encompass us, we must be fully prepared for immediate defence, for there will be no delaying action this time, not even on a five-mile stretch of country. One single battle need but be lost, and Paris will be swallowed up by blood and fire. The aggressor must at once find the defenders of France ready on the spot. The Germans have been methodical in their rearmament, they are pastmasters in the art of warfare, and they will grant us no respite. Their heaviest blows will be dealt at the outset of the war. Frederick the Great's tactics, Moltke's mass-armies, and Schlieffen's encircling movements acted like thunderbolts on France. Even to-day, Germany is vigorously preparing for invasion and she will set about it suddenly, catching us unawares unless France keeps a permanent outpost ever on the watch and ready to meet the first assault in full strength. Everything depends on the quality of our advance guard . . . France's standing army must be very determined and it is essential that it should be trained as

quickly as possible in every kind of motorized warfare. France can no longer depend on a "protective cover" unless she has a professional army of experts.'



It is an old axiom that 'victory comes to those who have the strongest battalions'. This is easily comprehensible to the man in the street, but in the course of time, what with developments in the manufacture of arms and other military equipment, its interpretation has greatly altered. As de Gaulle correctly recognized, 'the advent of motors and panzers, etc., has initiated a new type of mobile warfare which needs picked troops for its successful achievement. These soldiers must be as resilient as steel and as strong as concrete. France cannot afford to rely on the mere number of her forces when she has to avert the initial blows. . . . The time has come when what we most urgently need is a mobile army which can take action immediately and at once without any delay. Of course, in addition to these crack troops, France will need an army of reservists and recruits. But the latter, while I am by no means underrating their utility, can only be assembled slowly and trained laboriously; they would not be ready for action until the last moments of the danger facing us.'

De Gaulle's publication wherein he gave expression to his train of thought was dedicated 'To the French Army for Manifesting its Faith, its Strength, and its Glory'. But the French army bigwigs continued placidly to sleep. Young German officers of the von Seeckt school lost no time in translating de Gaulle's book into their own language and they made good use of it. Since it reinforced their own and von Seeckt's ideas, they used it as a means of propaganda for enforcing this particular point of view on Germany. They even exclaimed, 'Hurrah! Von Seeckt was the originator of the ideas voiced by de Gaulle!'

In the preface to the German edition of de Gaulle's book we read: 'By the Treaty of Versailles, France thought to impose a mercenary army on Germany. She wished this army to remain old-fashioned and deprived of dangerous weapons. She deemed that was the only way she could feel secure. To her consternation France has found what a sharp and efficient war weapon we have been able to forge from that same army . . . The German reader of this book will draw his own conclusions as to whether we have created an army which surprises even our enemy, and whether

we have abandoned the idea of forming units of picked troops in favour of mass-armies. . . .'

What happened in 1806 was repeated in 1918. The terms imposed on the conquered by the victorious enemy gave birth to the military principles which led to the defeat of the victors of yesterday. In 1806 the conservatives refused to sanction the organization of universal compulsory military service; in 1918 the same spirit opposed the modern idea of mobile troops of picked soldiers. The new doctrine had to put up a ceaseless fight to maintain its own, and when all is said and done, it was the victors who were responsible for the creation of the German professional army. It was partly on this account that, in March 1935, universal military service was once again introduced. The adherents of the old school fought tooth and nail against the imputation that this constituted a setback. But the others emphasized again and again that the gist of von Seeckt's conception was essentially correct. The 'universal obligation to serve in the army' in no way conflicted with von Seeckt's wishes in the matter of army reform. It depended upon how the innovation was handled. On this point there arose many heated disputes. The new military outlook did not give its assent to the 'educational methods of the Hitler Youth', nor to the creation of the S.S. troops, nor to the 'roll-call of the working masses' (Workers' Front), which were all inspired by Old Prussian ideals.

In 1937, Major Foertsch, who was at the time in the Reichswehr Ministry, remarked that the methods of 'training soldiers adopted in the year 1906 are quite out of date now and these "roll-calls of the working masses", far from inspiring a soldierly spirit, are prone to create quite the opposite'. As a matter of fact, the present-day army was endeavouring to develop personality, and was giving a preponderant place to education and not to the drilling of recruits. 'Can such dangerous formalities in the soldiers' lives of olden times arise again nowadays in the lives of the ordinary citizen?'

The army complained frequently of the lack of any kind of spiritual education among the rising generation and of a perceptible retrogression in the schedule of studies. It was with profound concern that the war economists looked into the future, for 'the benches of our technical colleges remain empty and this means that our technical advance in the matter of armaments will be gravely endangered sooner or later. A warning as to the seriousness of the situation is not out of place', writes Beutler in May 1937.

But for the time being Germany disposed of very adequate resources in the way of capital to live on. In the January 17th issue of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (1937) we read — the article was probably penned at the instigation of certain members of the Reichswehr — that the high cultural level to which von Seeckt had brought the army was definitely on the decline and that of late 'a dubious tendency is making itself conspicuous in the army. Should this tendency get the upper hand, it will vitally jeopardize the quality of the army, or at all events will have vexatious repercussions on the army'.

In 1937, Foertsch surmised that universal and compulsory military service was nowadays not, as so many people seemed to suppose, to be compared with what it had been in earlier days. True, not all the men fit for service were being called up, but this was for quite other reasons than heretofore. Also the serving man was willing to continue long past the allotted legal time, so that a regular professional army was gradually being formed on a voluntary basis. Thus, in spite of the growth in numbers, the quality of the picked troops did not deteriorate. By the force of its own momentum, a well-established military organization is coming into being. This is all in favour of the Third Reich . . . and so on. Quite otherwise was the state of military affairs in France. In that country, far from making progress and being the exemplary organization it once was, the French army was becoming so enfeebled that ultimately it caused the total collapse of the country. The outstanding victories achieved at the beginning of the second World War by Germany must be attributed in large measure to the fact that the army had had to be built up, as it were, from scratch, but on good lines as laid down by von Seeckt and those who worked with him and knew what they were aiming at. The immense productive power of German technique and industry, which the Nazis at one time at the start of their regime frowned upon because they wished to revive handicrafts, was the basic element in these German victories.

In November 1935, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* drew its readers' attention to the great obstacles encountered by the French army in its endeavours at reform. The French dislike of any form of mechanization played an important part in the difficulties with which the French military authorities were beset. 'Every turn on the road to improvement in this respect is accompanied by a vast amount of discussion from the more cautious elements, because they fear encroachments on human liberty by the introduction of

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"dangerous technical devices".' In view of what actually has taken place in France, and considering her economic, social, and spiritual structure, she must now realize that the path she entered upon was the wrong one so far as human liberty is concerned, for nowadays human liberty can only be attained by technical achievements, and never in opposition to such developments, whether in peace or war. In Germany this was realized with crystal clarity, so that every opportunity to utilize her technical resources was seized upon to make the necessary improvements. Thus, at one stride, the disunity between technician, scholar, industrialist, and soldier, which had so hampered Imperial Germany, was overcome and settled by von Seeckt and his disciples. The elder Moltke's ideas, too, came into their own.

During the time von Seeckt was up and doing and while the machinery of production was set in motion, preliminary measures were taken to come to an agreement with Russia. An actual alliance of the Soviet power and Germany did not, of course, take effect until a later date. The conclusion of the Pact made Germany's victory over France possible. Everyone knows its dramatic conclusion. But in Germany the discussions and disputes upon this political issue during the interlude between the two Great Wars were not only bitter in the extreme but seemed interminable. The reasons which led to the Nazis' anti-Russian policy, why and how they suddenly took up their enemies' point of view in this matter, the dubious motives behind the subsequent Russo-German agreement—all these questions are dealt with in other books. It is likely that the National Socialists would never have veered round as they did had it not been that in certain army and industrial circles men had striven for at least twenty years to bring about friendly relations between Russia and Germany so as to produce confidence in the Russians' minds as regarded Germany's intentions. The Soviets, on the other hand, had excellent motives for wishing to establish a good understanding with Germany, for otherwise the Germans would have hurled the full strength of their military might against Russia at a far earlier date. But it is obvious that the Nazis hoped that their sudden agreement with Russia would produce a deep impression on France and more particularly upon Great Britain, so that each of these western powers might withdraw their signed obligations with regard to Polish integrity and thus capitulate to Germany's demands. The Nazis were disappointed in their expectations, as we have

lived to see, despite the complete collapse of Polish resistance. On September 1st, 1939, the war against Poland began and on September 3rd Great Britain declared war on Germany. France was at first reluctant to declare war, but she fell into line subsequently.

Britain's declaration was of far greater historical significance than France's belated entry into the war. The die had been cast. For the third time a land power set out to fight British sea power. For Germany it was the second attempt. The Nazi Government entered the present war with the most powerful war machinery the world had ever seen. It baffled the liveliest imagination.

## NEW WORLD WAR—OLD PROBLEMS

DURING the months preceding the active operations in Western Europe in 1940, Germany behaved as though victory on the continent would force Great Britain to surrender and make peace on Germany's own terms. In this belief, the Russo-German pact was concluded. Like the alliance between Napoleon and Alexander, this agreement seemed a fairly reliable one. It was claimed that in the common interests of mankind Great Britain and her allies should make peace as soon as possible. The two governments declared that measures would be taken if the British did not comply (September 28th, 1939). But the people of the island realm remembered that much the same thing had happened in Napoleonic times, so they imperturbably sat back and awaited events.

Day by day the German press announced that the British blockade was a fiasco and the claim was even more stridently made when on February 11th, 1940, the Russo-German economic pact was published. By this it was agreed that Russian resources, her mineral oil, cotton, iron and manganese ores, timber, flax, and, above all, her cereals and other food commodities, would be available for Germany. A huge European-cum-Asiatic economic unity had by a stroke of the pen come into existence and one of the signatories to the deed at any rate thought that thereby Britain's fate was sealed. Rome echoed the shout over the Brenner Pass: 'What a victory over the plutocrats!', while the *Essene Nationalzeitung* wrote with glee that the pact signified not merely a victory but a campaign already won. An erstwhile Secretary of State, Baron von Rheinbaben, explained the military situation at that time in an article which appeared in the *Pester Lloyd* of November 19th, 1939: '... And last but not least, the Russo-German alliance makes it impossible for the western powers to win the war in any way, whether by military action, or by political and economic pressure. Fundamental facts cannot be ignored by means of propaganda.'

At the time there were constant rumours put about as to a Russo-German military alliance. In addition there was another rumour afloat that the Russians intended to march upon India. This was not inconceivable seeing that Napoleon contemplated doing precisely the same thing. Further, there existed various traditional antagonisms between the

Russians and the British in Asia, so that the attitude of the Soviet Republic after the pact was signed was a matter of much speculation.

It is not surprising that the German press enlarged upon the topic in lively fashion from time to time. The *Hamburger Tageblatt* of November 25th, 1939, reminded its readers that the tsar, Paul I, had in 1800, in accordance with a plan worked out by Napoleon, dispatched troops to Turkestan with a view to the conquest of India. This newspaper indulged in the delightful anticipation that the Russian rulers of 1939 might follow the same example under the auspices of the new alliance. The article in question bore the title 'Stranglehold on India'. In it we read: 'The probability of riots occurring in India is an important asset to Russia, for many Indians are only waiting for Russian aid to shake off the yoke of the English.' Notwithstanding these incitements, Stalin failed to interpret the alliance in the same way as Paul I had done. This is thoroughly comprehensible seeing that the National Socialists had always aimed at Germany's expansion 'at the expense of Russia and her vassal border states,' as Hitler writes in *Mein Kampf*. The ostentatious enmity of the Nazis towards the Soviet form of government thus through the force of circumstances took a strange twist in August 1939. Stalin had far better reasons to ask himself what would become of his Russia than had either Paul I or Alexander I should Britain's foe prove in the end victorious.

What many Germans expected from the alliance with Soviet Russia finds clear expression in a booklet entitled *General Ludendorff*. It was published after the last World War and its anonymous author professes himself to be 'a soldier'. In this little book, the author expounds the idea that Great Britain, though not a continental power, could well have been defeated in the east, for there a decision might have been achieved by a comparatively small army. All that needed to be done was to secure peace with Russia and . . . the road to India would lie open. At that juncture peace would have been assured, and the peace would have been an advantageous one for Germany. What military circles had to say about this modern version of Alexander's plan will be discussed later. It is amply evident that our anonymous soldier hoped that Napoleon's conceptions would materialize and he seems to have believed that the mere threat of such an invasion of India would suffice to bring England to her knees. It is likely that in 1939 the Germans hoped for a similar result as a consequence of the Russo-German pact!

A few days after the signing of this pact, Hitler spoke again of the possibility of an alliance with England. But Great Britain preserved her usual calm in face of her diplomatic failure in eastern Europe and the over-running of Poland. The Germans were amazed. The *Völkischer Beobachter* (which was the organ of National Socialism) wrote on September 1st, 1940: 'How could any sane person have believed that, after wrecking the French and British encircling policy in eastern Europe by the Moscow Treaty of August 23rd and the complete defeat of Poland, both France and Great Britain would have ventured to defy Germany?'

When we consider the course English history has taken throughout the centuries, there is nothing to be astonished at that she failed to accept defeat in spite of the Russo-German pact and the collapse of her ally Poland. Nor need anyone feel surprised that the German Reich Chancellor's peace proposals of October 6th, 1939, met with no response on the part of the British. On September 19th, 1939, Hitler declared in one of his speeches at Danzig that the Russo-German agreement had once and for all refuted England's assertion that the Nazi government aimed at the political domination of the world. In a subsequent oration on October 6th, 1939, Hitler made use of similar arguments, averring that the recent agreement with Russia proved beyond a doubt that the suggestions of Germany's designs on the Urals, the Ukraine, Rumania, and so forth, were morbid delusions. Still Great Britain retained her composure; she no longer placed trust in any assurances of this kind. She remained steadfast in her resolution to prosecute the war.

Had people's expectations been realized, an air offensive on the grand scale ought to have started at once. But to everyone's surprise nothing of the sort happened. Clausewitz wrote that 'the combatant who wishes to gain time and to husband his resources must on no account put all his energies into increased military operations'. It is highly probable that it was for this very reason that Great Britain was so cautious in respect of her air arm at the beginning of the war while carrying out with the utmost vigour her policy of the blockade. But what was the cause of Germany's restraint? The question is perhaps best answered by Metsch and by Pintschovius in 1936, when the former remarked that every war is 'a leap into the void' and the latter when he said that 'total war might turn out to be a curse to us rather than a blessing'. Every country seems to have felt the insignificance of the individual will when confronted by the dynamics

of modern warfare. This may explain why there was none of the 'hurrah patriotism', so manifest in 1914 and so lacking in 1939.

A further possibility is that the German war machine was held in check for political reasons. It cannot be denied that efforts were made to come to a settlement with the United Kingdom, for the outbreak of war was unexpected by many in Germany as hitherto Hitler had had unbroken success with his 'dynamic' foreign policy. Unfortunately a totalitarian state is not in a position to remedy the errors it may have committed. While preparing and initiating war, the totalitarian state seems to be superior to a democratic one. But even before the war started, the totalitarian states showed serious flaws so that when the critical moment arrived they proved themselves incapable of making the relationship between politics and the conduct of war advantageous and expedient to themselves. In this particular matter they were if possible more incompetent than had been the semi-absolutist state of William II.

In June 1939 Hitler declared that 'there are no more Bethmann-Hollwegs to-day in the German government'. From the point of view of waging an energetic war, this might in certain respects be an asset. On the other hand it might prove to be quite the contrary if, later on, Germany were to find, as she did in the first World War, that the issue could not be decided on the battlefield alone. When one compares Wilson's speeches with those of Roosevelt since the outbreak of the second World War, one is struck by the fact that German-American relations were far and away better in the days of Bethmann-Hollweg than they have been since Hitler came to power. A negotiated peace is, therefore, much more difficult to attain now than it was then.

Even the preparations made by the totalitarian states on the economic front were two-edged. From a military point of view and immediately after the outbreak of this war Germany was at an advantage because her rulers had ruthlessly pressed forward the rearmament of the country without regard to sound finance or to a peace-time policy. This was in absolute contradiction with von Seeckt's ideas, which were shared by many others among his compatriots. Much of the vast accumulation of war material was already out-moded by the time the war began and it continued to be so in the earlier months of the conflict. Nor must we forget the high quality of British aircraft when compared with those of the Third Reich. All the same, the odds were decidedly on the side of

Germany who had started her war-time production well in advance of any other nation. As American experience has shown, it is no easy matter to transform peace-time production into production for the needs of war. Yet by the time war was declared, war industries of every conceivable kind were already carefully mapped out by most of the belligerents and especially by Great Britain, who was in a position to make the necessary adjustments almost immediately. Seeckt had always admired the achievements of Great Britain in this respect during the first World War. He regarded them as an ideal from which to take example. The Nazis rejected such views. In so far as they contemplated a swift decision in the pending war, the Nazis were to a considerable extent correct in taking this line.

But when the clouds of war loomed up, the question of armament production became a fearsome business and showed no signs of abating. Statesmen were duly impressed by the speed and enormous dimensions with which armament manufacture went ahead. In former wars the dynamics of armament had played an important part in the decisions of the various belligerents, but the era of total war, with its complement of total armament, utterly changed the state economy and the aspect of social life. Never before had this fact been so apparent. On November 9th, 1940, the Chancellor of the Third Reich said that from the moment he had become convinced that England was playing for time he had but one wish that 'the English, when they declared war, would do so while I am still alive'. He remarked in reply to Mr. Neville Chamberlain, that he preferred to wage war at fifty than at fifty-five or sixty. One can readily understand the Chancellor's desire, for, as time went on, the masses of armaments which Germany had been for years accumulating would become increasingly out-of-date. Another thing to be considered was that Germany could not indefinitely continue under the strain which total war production inevitably imposed. Such advantage as Germany had achieved during the years of peace could not be renewed and she would once again be confronted with protracted diplomatic discussions precisely as she had after the last Great War. Again, it was impossible to foresee all the complications which would arise when and if the Third Reich endeavoured to change over to normal conditions and adapt the country to the general laws governing world economy.

There is no denying the fact that in the autumn of 1939 Central Europe was armed to the teeth as never nations had been before. The old German strategy of a quick decision had everything in its favour for waging what is now termed a 'lightning war'. Operating from an inner line and having at her disposal this vast accumulation of war material, Germany was able to hurl herself on her opponents and to gain every initial advantage. Though her geographical position puts her at a disadvantage when her military arm is weak, in the present conflict this concentration of power in an internal position proved the contrary.

Since the western powers refused to surrender, Germany was compelled to take the offensive. One of the many surprises of the war is that this offensive began in the Scandinavian countries. But as has been seen from comment on Rear-Admiral Wegener's brochure, the experiences of the Central Powers during the first World War had made this action imperative. Even more so, for the Nazi navy was so inadequate that it was highly improbable the British would content themselves with blockading 'from a distance' as they had been satisfied to do during the first World War. In the present instance, however, it was quite possible to substitute aircraft for seagoing vessels both in Denmark and in Norway, in each of which countries there were admirable points on the seaboard where bases could be formed. Another thought which occupied the German strategists' minds was how best to cover their flank in the impending assault on France.

In the summer of 1939 Metsch wrote that the only way for Germany's struggle to be successful was to take the enemy totally by surprise. At the same time he warned his people that they must not overrate the value of a strategic surprise attack. Nor, he maintained, did initial successes in any way guarantee a final victory. 'The odium attaching to a brutal breach of peace, and a complete disregard of the customary usages of warfare might', he said, 'lead to a serious deterioration of diplomatic relations concerning the war.' Further, to renounce the use of an effective weapon would be better than giving vent to blind fury which must lead to world disapproval and incalculable results. The nature of war needs careful study so that those in a position of authority may know when, where, and how force has to be used. It was only by such means that resistance could be broken without awakening fresh reasons for conflict and animosity on the part of the enemy.

The National Socialists do not seem to have paid much heed to these earnest warnings when they attacked Norway. Undoubtedly Wegener would have tackled the problem in quite another way. But in Wegener's day things were different from what they are under the Nazi regime. When, in 1914, the Imperial armies invaded Belgium, the whole world shook with indignation. The Chancellor at that time was Bethmann-Hollweg and, with a wary eye on the diplomatic situation, he tried to justify the violation of Belgian neutrality by insisting on the urgency of strategical necessity. All the same he frankly acknowledged that a gross injustice had been done to Belgium. When Class read the Chancellor's words, he exclaimed: 'Now, from the diplomatic point of view, the war is already lost!' There were other men, too, who believed Bethmann-Hollweg's candour disastrous, and considered that he should have spoken in quite different terms, were it merely for the sake of sound propaganda in the diplomatic field.



Germany's advantage in her thorough knowledge of the Schlieffen plan and the experiences gained by her in endeavouring to put it into execution during the first World War can hardly be overestimated. Schlieffen had deemed it would be essential for the success of his plan to strike farther north in order to carry out his encircling movement, marching through Belgium of a certainty and even invading part of Holland. Well, at least the latter country was spared during the last war because, as Kuhl observes, 'Colonel von Moltke had decided to respect the neutrality of Holland'. But in 1940 it seemed expedient to strike even farther north so as to procure suitable air bases and strategically important points should a fight at sea become necessary. These aims were considered to be of paramount importance. Rear-Admiral Groos went into the matter very thoroughly in a booklet issued just prior to the occupation of Denmark and Norway: 'In one respect the war of to-day may be compared with that of 1914-18. It can only be lost or won if we take Great Britain into account.' It is significant that in naval circles hardly a man thought otherwise.

Germany did not venture to make a frontal attack on the Maginot line. Though she had made tremendous strides in the technique of war and possessed immense superiority in her amount of war material, she

followed to the letter all that Schlieffen had recommended. This confirms the conviction that Germany had a great respect for the French fortification system; so as far as it went it cannot have been the failure so many are apt to suppose. Germany had followed France's suit when she constructed in her turn a system of fortifications known as the Siegfried line, thus proving that she in no way disapproved the combination of mobile strategy with static warfare which any line of fortifications implies. If de Gaulle's ideas had been carried out, fortifications such as the Maginot line would not have been excluded. Were France to be guaranteed completely against assault, she would have needed her Maginot line as well as a thoroughly mechanized and motorized army such as de Gaulle struggled to obtain. Germany had to outflank the Maginot line, and so from the moment real warfare began both Holland with her little army of two hundred thousand men and Belgium with her army of three hundred and fifty thousand joined forces with the Allied cause.

Though Germany at the time of her great offensive in the West had to keep occupied so many countries conquered by her, this did not bother her, for unlike the war in 1914-18 she had war on one front only. Also, the French had to keep a considerable number of troops on the Italian frontier, since Italy's attitude had been ambiguous from the outset. Nonetheless, the numerical balance of forces was rather more in France's favour than it had been in 1914 — though Pétain tried to prove the contrary. But then he based his calculations on estimates drawn up in 1917 and 1918, which was not a sound or reliable foundation for his estimate.

As already mentioned, the belief was current in military circles in Germany that the Schlieffen plan did not prove successful in 1914 because compulsory military service had not been utilized to the full. The Chief of the French General Staff, Buat, pointed out that in August 1914 the Germans could have put 600,000 more men in the field, but in that case she would have strained her military power to the limit as France had done: The peace-time strength of the French army was rather greater than that of the First Reich in spite of the latter's far higher population. In the summer of 1914 the proportion was 767,000 to 761,000 (*Propyläen-Weltgeschichte*, vol. x, p. 379), but the armies actually in the field were not quite in the same proportion.

Churchill, in his great work on the first World War, states that out of the 2,000,000 men Germany hurled against Belgium and France, 1,300,000

were reservists and the remaining 700,000 were formed by the standing army. Against these 700,000 active troops France set out with the same number, whereas against the 1,200,000 reservists of the enemy France could only assemble 600,000 men. True, France had another 1,200,000 reservists, but they lacked arms, officers, cadres, and so forth. Thus the German superiority in numbers was equivalent to three to two. Germany had seventy-eight divisions on the western front to the combined Franco-English number of fifty-five. Yet the Central Powers failed to carry out Schlieffen's plan exactly because it would have required another nineteen divisions, seventy-one of which should have been available for the vast encircling movement through Belgium. The German C. in C., Moltke, had nineteen divisions less on the direct front and sixteen less for the contemplated encircling movement, out of which, furthermore, four divisions were taken from him to man the eastern front.

The Allied superiority of three to two did not, however, exist in 1940. The Nazis' contention that on May 10th, 1940, the Germans set forth to battle with less troops than the combined forces of Holland, Belgium, France, and Great Britain cannot be written off as sheer propaganda. Victor Vinde, in his excellent book about the causes of the French collapse, tells his readers that the strength of the armies on both sides was approximately equal. This was vehemently denied by both Pétain and Weygand. Whatever these two generals may say, it is the accepted fact that on each side the number of troops was from 2,000,000 to 2,500,000 men. If there was any superiority in numbers at all it was, so far as Germany was concerned, nothing like what she had enjoyed in 1914. In spite of France's decrease in population, her army was about equal in numbers with what she had sent out to battle in the previous war. These men were trained in the old-fashioned way which existed under the French laws of conscription. France did not, therefore, consider that she was at a greater disadvantage with regard to Germany in 1940 than she had been in 1914. Though the political struggles which had persisted in Imperial Germany were no longer the rule when the National Socialists came to power, yet we have to remember that universal military service had been re-introduced into the totalitarian state only in 1935, whereas this form of military service had continued uninterrupted in France since Napoleonic days.

Another fact we must bear in mind is that when compulsory military

service came once more into force in Germany, mechanized warfare had already made great strides, and de Gaulle was right when he said to Maréchal Pétain that France's collapse was not so much due to any inferiority in numbers as to the lack of the necessary equipment for prosecuting a modern war. Here again von Seeckt's prophetic insight proved correct. Fuller went so far as to declare that the next war might consist in a single combat only and be over and done with in a few hours. On the other hand, he recognized that war between highly mechanized armies of about equal strength might settle down to trench warfare again. But his theories could not be put to the test seeing that France did not possess a mechanized army.

In the Chamber of Deputies Paul Reynaud, Prime Minister in those critical days, was an unwearied advocate of the mechanization of the French army. Influenced to a large extent by de Gaulle, he wrote a book on mechanized warfare wherein he urgently demanded large-scale production of tanks and planes. He, too, met with obtuse opposition from the French High Command. It was not until the Maginot line had been breached that de Gaulle was appointed to a better post, and admitted to the Ministry of War. He had to witness his ominous predictions verified, for the first battle lost led to the collapse of France's military resistance. The almost complete lack of mechanized units foredoomed her to total defeat, inexorably and inevitably.



Incredible as it may appear, the French were as surprised by Germany's tank army in 1940 as the Germans had been twenty-two years previously by the emergence of the Franco-British tank forces. The events which occurred at the time were as if no victorious tank battle had taken place in 1918 at Amiens. On the road to Cambrai—that is to say in the same sector of the front where the first tank battle in the history of the world had annihilated the foe's resistance and where the new tactics of war had been introduced—in that same region the panzer divisions broke through, crushing everything in their path. Lieutenant Erich Welter, describing these fearsome happenings in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of June 9th, 1940, writes: 'The German panzers drove . . . right through the French columns to a depth of from ten to twenty kilometres. Panzers, troops, vehicles of all kinds . . . well, anybody who saw the gruesome sight knows how

to reply to the question as to whether the motorization of the army stood the test . . . Almost without meeting any resistance, the German panzers rolled in formation along the crowded roads leading through Belgium towards Calais — and this despite the fact that the Allies had devised their plan of campaign in 1919 precisely along these lines of attack! Never in the whole annals of world history has a nation so shortsightedly and lightheartedly allowed its military supremacy to perish as did the French after being victors in the last war.

Von Seeckt, with true German thoroughness, examined all the possibilities which tank warfare presented and actually brought his dreams into existence. Not only did he do this in masterly fashion but the units he formed were at a wonderful level of efficiency. In 1935 von Seeckt had published a new and amplified edition of his book *Thoughts of a Soldier*, issued not merely in connection with the rebuilding and re-arming of the army but with another and more special idea in mind. At the time there existed various tendencies and theories as regarded the armed forces of the Third Reich. Keitel, for instance, who was an intimate of Nazi circles, declared in November 1935 that 'those who are not preparing an offensive war against the Great Wall of China nor thinking of subjugating alien folk can easily dispense with the services of crack regiments composed of men who are soldiers by profession and whose stay in the armed forces is for a long period of time. Such pacific nations can content themselves with short-time service and training. The potency of German soldiers will most certainly not decline under such restrictions.' He was obviously out to rub von Seeckt up the wrong way. Had the authorities yielded to Keitel and had von Seeckt's ideas of *élite* troops not been adopted, it is a question as to whether Keitel as C. in C. would ever have been in a position to present the terms of an armistice to the French mandatories in 1940. Von Seeckt's principles were firmly and methodically carried out, and the battlefields of Europe in the second World War demonstrate how correct his judgment was.

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The tragedy which befell France is, however, rooted in other causes. Why did France so completely crumple up? Why did she give up hope? Why did Maréchal Pétain not give a thought to continuing the struggle with the backing of the French navy and colonial possessions?

Characteristic sayings such as 'the miracle of the Marne' and 'the Pétain miracle' seem to me to shed a good deal of psychological light on the phenomena of 1914 and 1940.

The battle of the Marne was a turning-point in the last war and France herself was, until the victory of the Allies, the battleground of some of the fiercest and most devastating fighting. French territory was fought for tooth and nail, millions of tons of steel came hurtling down on French soil, the vastest armies known to history lay in filthy trenches opposite one another, innumerable mothers lost their sons, sisters their brothers, women their husbands, fiancées their lovers, the blood of hundreds of thousands was shed in streams. On this same land the Allies defeated the German armies in the latter months of 1918 with the aid of armoured cars, and it was in France that the German commission received the terms of the armistice they were compelled to ask for. When the war was a thing of the past, the traveller wandering among the vast graveyards saw innumerable bare crosses, rows upon rows of them far and wide across the lands of France. No one could walk in that region which had once been the scene of the World War without feeling a constriction about the heart. How woebegone the whole place seemed! There the French peasant valiantly ploughing his land would unearth human bones, steel, iron, year after year. Yet in French history books, in the schools, and among the whole nation, the 'miracle of the Marne' would be celebrated as though by it France herself and the whole of European civilization had triumphed over German militarism. Had the battle of the Marne been lost everything would have been lost, said the French people. The Germans, on the contrary, declared that with the battle of the Marne won everything was won. In France the 'miracle of the Marne' was celebrated with honours; in Germany it was regarded as a tragedy; and in both countries alike the battle of the Marne was looked upon as a deep and inscrutable mystery. Victors and conquered alike sang heroic songs of the deeds of bravery performed by their men during the sanguinary fight. The battle of the Marne became the main subject of narrator, poet, and legend. But, as Meurer says with his usual sang-froid: 'The fighting and heroism displayed during this campaign in no way affected the outcome of the war.' What endowed the French with such tenacity of purpose and enabled them to endure the rigours, the bloodshed, and the sufferings the war entailed was their unshakable belief that the issue

## NEW WORLD WAR—OLD PROBLEMS

had to be decided on their own soil once and for all and that the world would be lost should France fall.

This strong belief acted like a sacred fire to kindle their endurance, but it crumbled and was shattered to pieces when the German panzers in 1940 overran the land, crushing towns, districts, and provinces for whose integrity the French had fought so long and so courageously during the first World War. When France seemed lost beyond recall Frenchmen considered that the whole war was lost as well, and so her people sank into despondency and resignation.

Historians might have pointed out to their hearts' content what had been the experiences of the Napoleonic epoch and the significance of sea power; nobody would have heeded their wisest words, for the French people were at the moment of the catastrophic event incapable of taking any other than the pessimistic view. They were too deeply despondent after the collapse of all their hopes. Their hearts were still filled with the prodigious and as they imagined lasting results of the first World War. They had neither time nor thought to reflect upon the far-away epoch of Napoleonic times. Besides, what did sea power signify to those who imagined that the war had been won by land power alone? Even France's great generals, Joffre and Foch, thought along much the same lines. Liddell Hart, after an exhaustive investigation, came to the conclusion that Foch was extraordinarily hidebound in his concepts regarding maritime affairs. The English author attributes much of this narrow-mindedness to the fact that Foch was reared too much on Clausewitz' ideas. He declares that Foch needlessly sacrificed the lives of his men by carrying out Clausewitz' offensive strategy which, considering the immense development of armament in modern times, was no longer applicable. Still, Foch aimed at annihilating the enemy at any cost. The Germans, too, hounded the flower of their young manhood into the firing line until at length they came to realize that Clausewitz' strategy of annihilation, at least so far as that war was concerned, had reached a dead-point owing to the immense power possessed by modern weapons. Then the British navy came into her own, for had she not secured the seaways and water communications France would inevitably have lost the war even with a severely blockaded Germany. Since the effects of the British blockade and the successful achievement in keeping sea communications open to trade were not ostentatious facts, and by no means as spectacular

as the gains on land, the French people ignored them, and it is therefore not surprising that in the hour of her collapse she should have seen no gleam of hope though the British navy was far from being bested or the British Empire conquered.

In his dramatic description of the French collapse, Victor Vinde tells us that both Pétain and Laval were convinced that within a few days or at least within a few months the British Empire would crumble away. It is of peculiar interest that the French generals so totally misjudged the war situation. 'When I warned them that Britain would fight on alone whatever they did, their generals told their Prime Minister and his divided Cabinet: "In three weeks England will have her neck wrung like a chicken";' said Churchill. And on December 30th, 1941, he added in the Canadian House of Commons: 'Some chicken! Some neck!'

When the French coined the phrase 'the Pétain miracle', it seems that it was the subconscious expression of the role they had played in the first World War when contrasted with the utter failure and the despondency ensuing upon their effort during the second World War. It shows also how utterly confounded the French were by the happenings of 1940. From what we know of the venerable and honoured warrior Pétain, like so many others of his calling he had absolutely no interest in world politics or in sea warfare. True to his country's traditions, the old man stood on his native soil and thought solely in terms of continental warfare. He shared nothing in common with that other grand old man Churchill, the son of a great empire backed by a magnificent navy, a man who thought in terms of world politics. As for poor old Pétain, he judged the issue by the conditions prevailing at the time in the western theatre of war and was quite willing to throw up the game (had it been in his power to do so) some months previous to the final victory of the Nazis. His profound pessimism worried many among his entourage. There is nothing to wonder at that he found it hard to make up his mind to continue the fight in 1940, for he was already well up in years. Besides, the whole of the military world he had been brought up on had broken to atoms. It required a man who was firmly convinced that the new methods of warfare were the correct ones for the epoch to be able to pull himself together in the circumstances and persist in France's participation in the fight. Pétain was not the man for such an emergency. Even though Great Britain co-operated with all her might, he did not see that this

would make any difference to the final outcome. Though in 1870-71, France had been unsupported in her duel with Germany, men then felt and thought quite otherwise.



But there was one man who understood, and that was de Gaulle. He managed to get to England and urged his compatriots, both technicians, specialists, and sundry, to follow his example. By broadcasts and any means available he pressed his countrymen not to give up the fight and sink into despair. Wireless, which plays so imposing a role in modern life, gave him access to the French who had remained behind, so that from the distant shores of England he and those who worked with him could speak the language of his fellow-countrymen in more senses than one. Meanwhile, he spared himself no effort to give birth to his ideas of military reform. Certainly the German military authorities had not been wrong in noting this officer's achievements—at least those among them who had been responsible for the translation of de Gaulle's book into German and who called him 'a highly educated, ingenious, and far-sighted French patriot'. Only the future will show whether de Gaulle is that rare personality which combines within himself both military and political genius.

The fact that Mussolini hurriedly entered the war at the time of the French collapse suggests that Italy, too, considered the war to be terminated and that little further fighting would take place on the European continent. Also we may well imagine how delighted the Nazis were at having at length achieved the 'Cannae' which had been frustrated in the first World War. True, the final victory over Great Britain lay in the womb of time. It is even possible that some of the older generation of Germans were still wondering why Germany in 1914, having failed to bring the United Kingdom to book, could not, now that the famous 'Cannae' had come to a successful conclusion, end the war within a few months.

Yes, in 1940 the Germans had won their 'Cannae' to the full, for the French did not even oppose her with the navy or with the splendid colonial resources which remained intact. From time to time the Vichy government even adopted a menacing attitude towards her allies of yesterday. There was likewise the Russian enigma, for the Soviets were cut off from Britain by strained diplomatic relations and occasionally it looked

as if Russia meant to throw in her lot with Germany. Poland was no longer in the picture. Italy, having entered the war on the side of Germany at the moment of France's defeat, was useful to her Axis partner because she threatened some of the British Empire's key positions in the Mediterranean and in Africa, where England had to play a lone hand since the collapse of France. Spain's attitude was ambiguous. In the Far East Japan was uncertain and dangerous. Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium were in German occupation. The situation was full of peril for Great Britain. Nevertheless, and knowing the 'frightfulness' of U-boat and aircraft warfare and the efficiency of German armaments, Great Britain refused to capitulate after the 'Cannae' in France. She had not surrendered in 1914, so why should she do so now?

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Still there are two aspects of the question which need some consideration. In 1914, the United Kingdom did not know if or on which side the United States of America would enter the conflict. Secondly, it was impossible to foresee whether the existing British government would be capable of rousing the nation and the Dominions to stand in arms against a victorious Germany should the latter propose a negotiated peace with terms which would prove acceptable and with the pledge of restoring Belgian independence.

In his work *The Great War*, Churchill states that in the long run the combined efforts of the United States and the British Empire would have bested Germany even had France been conquered, but had the Germans come out victorious in the battle of the Marne, the war would have ended within six weeks. Had this been the case, the Kaiser and all his puppet regents and feudal aristocracy might have invented the legend of German invulnerability for many to regale themselves with in generations to come. But in their jubilation over their victory the Kaiser, his puppet regents, and the feudal aristocracy would in all probability have completely lost their heads. We have a precedent for this surmise. After the success of 1870-71, and even during the first World War, the casting votes of the German people would have gambled away the chance of a negotiated peace, in spite of more sober and farseeing Germans such as Bismarck. But in 1940 any thought of a negotiated peace was gambled away even before the victorious 'Cannae' in France.

On June 4th, 1940, in the House of Commons, Churchill spoke the significant words: 'Even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.'



From the start, as we see, Germany had made it impossible for her generals to carry home the news of a definite victory even after the crushing blows dealt to continental powers. Had the Germans adopted von Seeckt's ideas of policy and strategy, they might have stood a chance of doing so, but as things were matters had to take their allotted course. Von Seeckt certainly wished to throw off the shackles imposed on Germany by the Peace of Versailles and he seems to have contemplated war with France to achieve his ends. But to all intents and purposes, his aims, until the annexation of Czechoslovakia, might have been gained through peaceful channels. He was, however, quite willing to march through Belgium as he had done before, should circumstances demand such a movement, for we have to remember that he was a staunch upholder of the Schlieffen plan. Everything points to the fact that he would have concluded peace in just the same sober-minded way as it had been Bismarck's policy in his day. But in certain respects von Seeckt would have had to act differently from his predecessor, for a great deal of water had run under bridges since the Iron Chancellor held the reins of government. Political, social, and economic conditions had changed beyond recognition during the last forty or fifty years and von Seeckt would have had to take these into account—as he probably would. His conception of Germany's future could not have been realized at all unless he had been open to modern arguments.

In 1940 the old Schlieffen plan was brought into effect at a time when the stage reached by military development made it possible to resort to mobile warfare again. Many other preliminary conditions to the carrying out of the clauses of Schlieffen's military testament were present in 1940 whereas they were not in 1914. A 'Cannae' in France was not an illusion any more than Schlieffen's plan was a blundering miscalculation of possibilities. The only illusion which existed was that, by defeating France,

the Germans would be able to dictate peace terms to Great Britain. Whether the breakdown of France could affect the final victory was not so much a question of military tactics as of political negotiations and statesmancraft — and the course to be taken could only be decided when one knew what a German victory in the end would be like. If British honour and survival were at stake, the answer was perfectly clear. Indeed, since the fall of France, that answer has been extremely plainly made. Both Delbrück's and Boelcke's premonitions in the matter have been thoroughly substantiated. But as to their predictions regarding the future outcome of the war only the event itself will be able to prove.

Bitter disappointment was felt all over the Third Reich when, having gained their successful 'Cannae' in France, the war still dragged on. Many felt dismay that Great Britain, despite her precarious situation after the collapse of her ally, should decide to fight on alone, rejecting so definitely the Führer's offer of peace. Nevertheless, the Führer hoped that in the end Great Britain would change her mind. In his great speech on November 9th, 1940, Hitler remarked: 'I admit that it is hard for me to await England's decision because many have approached me saying, "How long, Führer, are you prepared to wait? They'll never stop of their own accord".' Churchill much later remarked: 'Hitler took it for granted that when France gave in we should give in; but we did not give in. And he had to think again.'

And so the mighty air battle began over the British Isles on August 8th, 1940. Whether, as so many of the English maintained, this was preliminary to a German invasion is hard to say. Be this as it may, the great Battle of Britain was certainly an attempt, by staking masses of airplanes on the venture, to bring the British to a 'sensible' frame of mind, since a properly mounted invasion seemed out of the question. Granted, there were still the U-boats ready to make Great Britain submit, but U-boat warfare cannot bring things to a speedy crisis seeing that it is more of the nature of a weapon of attrition than otherwise. But Germany wished for a lightning decision and counted on her Luftwaffe to bring it about. Having been disappointed in this, there seemed to be no prospect of a successful invasion to carry out the time-honoured strategy of annihilating the foe. And thus the main air battle over England came to an end on October 31st, 1940, and the strategy of annihilation was thrust into the background. Henceforth the Luftwaffe, though a formidable

arm, became a mere instrument in the war of attrition. This was the turning-point.



Great Britain was convinced that she would in the long run surmount every obstacle. On August 14th, 1940, Anthony Eden, who was then Secretary for War, said that the Germans seemed to imagine that the conflict would be over in the course of the coming months and indubitably before winter set in. The people of Great Britain thought otherwise, since for them and the Dominions the real war had only just begun. They were going to put their backs into it — that was a certainty.

German propaganda at that date appeared on the surface to be genuine, but we have taken its measure nowadays. The very essence of a lightning war was that a decision should be reached speedily and definitely. There was no object in a blitz war that was carried on by leaps and bounds with periods of quiescence in between. Should lightning war fail, 'the battle of massed armies must again be resorted to, the same kind as we experienced during the first World War', wrote Pintschovius in 1936. 'If this should prove to be the case, propaganda and economic warfare will have to be waged zealously, their main impetus being to reduce the spirit and morale of the enemy. Bombs, famine, and mistrust are the best bases to work from if we are to achieve the breakdown of the psychical front. This breakdown is merely a question of time.'

Towards the end of 1941 an article was published in the *Militärwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, organ of the German general staff, bearing as title 'The Foundations of England's Policy and Warfare'. In this occurs the sentence: 'Begin with the smallest means, but continue with a determined raising of the stakes until final success. This policy has remained typical of Great Britain until to-day.' The author is correct. But Great Britain was placed in jeopardy because her means of defence were too small in comparison with Germany's enormous strength at that time.

Churchill repeatedly emphasized the fact that sudden blows can be dealt in modern warfare, and 'we ask ourselves whether, under new conditions, time will be given us to realize the vast latent resources of the British Empire', he wrote in December 1936. The aim of this argument was to urge the necessity of speeding up armament production, and particularly of improving the air force in England. Relatively speaking,

much was done in this respect during the following years, at least in regard to English conditions, but very little was done in regard to Germany. 'French aircraft construction was, even in the years immediately preceding the second World War, hardly an "industry" but a "handicraft" — in spite of some excellent results', stated a German expert triumphantly. In industrial England the picture was totally different. Here the opinion prevailed, as it did in Germany, that air force could not take the place of sea power, but that sea power must be supported by air power. Neither can be separated from one another. England entered the war with an air force which, though outnumbered by Germany, was qualitatively at the highest level and capable of development by personal as well as industrial enterprise. The fact must not be overlooked that the building of the German air force was based on German land strategy whilst that of England was centred mainly on independent air attacks, air defence, and co-operation with her naval and mercantile forces. It must be presumed that Germany, in the summer and autumn of 1940, would have waged war on England with far larger air squadrons than she did had she only had more planes available. According to Hitler, Germany at that time was handicapped by the threat of Russia's steadily growing air force. The Führer said as much early in October 1941: 'To beat England we should have had to stake the full German air force. This was not possible since there existed a state in our rear which was making itself better and better equipped to march against the Reich at any moment.' In the days of the air battle over England the question was asked whether the immense losses in German planes were justifiable in view of so relatively small and well defended an air space. Even the strongest air power could not afford such heavy losses unless victory was possible within a short time and with absolute certainty.

German supremacy in the air could not be the decisive factor in the conflict with England as it was with France. Above all it must be realized that Germany's earlier successes on the continent were not due entirely to her supremacy in tanks and in motorized forces. The combined action of all these forces was the cause of Germany's victory on the continent, and only by the close co-operation of the Luftwaffe with the other war machinery could that be achieved which was achieved. When sea power is involved the situation is different altogether. In a land war places can be occupied by tactical utilization of paratroops dropped from planes,

causing disorganization and clearing the way for advancing tank formations with their following motorized infantry. Over the high seas planes must act independently, since they are deprived of the co-operation of tanks or any mobile land armies. Thus the German continental strategy ends where the ocean begins. Hitler said that England evaded the doom which befell France on account of her geographical situation. He was quite right, for Great Britain is an island realm. Hitler was also right when he declared that 'since the advent of planes there are no isles nowadays'. Count Pueckler says in his book on this topic: 'England is an island as she always has been and this affords her strategical advantages. But so far there is no new offensive weapon which can properly attack the island. As before, so now, the successful landing of enemy troops and their maintenance was impossible so long as the British navy keeps its supremacy.'

What applies to the British Isles does not apply to every island. The high culture, number, and spirit of the British as well as their good defensive appliances are quite exceptional. The conquest of Crete was an outstanding military achievement of great strategical importance, but 'that does not mean that every island can be taken in similar fashion, or that aircraft are superior to naval forces. Everything depends on circumstances', wrote the *Frankfurter Zeitung* at that time. Circumstances were especially unfavourable for the British forces in Crete. Among other handicaps, lack of airfields played a decisive role in the loss of Crete which had been in British hands for only a very short period. As in Norway previously, so in Crete, the lack of airfields could not be compensated by aircraft carriers. The British air force had to operate from Alexandria, four hundred miles away from Crete, whereas the German air fleet operated from Greece only about sixty-five miles from Crete. True, this was not Germany's only strategical advantage in the conquest of Crete. Furthermore, as an article in the *Military Scientific Review* of September 1941 emphasized, an attack on Crete could be successful only if undertaken from the north.

After the defeat at Crete the question was raised in England why the necessary airfields were not established immediately after Crete was taken over by the British. Churchill, replying to this question in the House of Commons, said that this would have been senseless or even inexpedient, since for lack of planes and anti-aircraft guns such airfields could not have

been successfully defended. The reason for this lack lay in that airplane and anti-aircraft guns were urgently needed in the homeland, in other theatres of war and, above all, in the battle of the Atlantic. In other words: Germany, having won the start in the armament race, also got the upper hand in Crete. The British fleet, too, had much to contend with in the Eastern Mediterranean for the same reason.

Sad as the Crete incident was, it must be remembered that the possession of Crete itself was not of such outstanding importance to England that very large naval forces should have been put into action, the more so since the Axis had a pretty formidable navy available in the Mediterranean. On the whole, conditions were similar to those in Norway. Some complaints raised in view of these events were met by Churchill with these words: 'When we speak of the command of the seas, that does not mean that the Royal Navy and its French ally commanded every part of the seas at the same moment or at every moment. It only means that we can make our will prevail ultimately in any part of the seas which may be selected for operations, and thus indirectly we can make our will prevail in every part of the seas. That is what command of the seas means.' (Speech on April 11th, 1940.)

It may be said that nothing is unimportant while waging war, but undoubtedly the battle for the Atlantic was of very great, nay of vital importance for Britain, as was also the protection of the British Isles. Naturally, therefore, the Royal Navy, England's most powerful weapon, was utilized in the first place for protecting Britain herself and her fleet of merchantmen and for carrying out the most urgent operations at the proper time.

The possession of an air force facilitates invasion, it is true. But if the enemy likewise has an air force at his disposal, invasion is rendered more difficult. The British have a formidable air force, thereby rendering invasion even more difficult. Rear-Admiral Groos, writing on 'operational landing' in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* early in June 1940, stressed the fact that the air force influenced very considerably the course of the occupation of Norway, but that complete success could only be achieved by efficient naval and mercantile forces which had to occupy the important coastal positions and to secure reinforcements. He remarks also that the quick occupation of the airfields during the strategical onslaught on Norway made it possible for the Germans immediately to achieve air

supremacy there, and this was a decisive factor. Groos observes, too, that the English aircraft carriers could not act as substitutes for airfields on land because they were less efficient and more vulnerable. Besides, the factor of surprise played a big part in the invasion of Norway by Germany.

So far as Great Britain is concerned, the surprise-factor is not to be taken into account since she never slackens her vigil. Her air force, whose eyes see everything and whose bombs could smash any invasion forces, has been trained and dedicated to its vitally important tasks.

From the point of view of air strategy, Great Britain is at a disadvantage seeing that she is a densely populated country, that she has many and big industrial plants, and that her railways and roads extend in all directions. On the other hand, these very things are of great advantage in case of invasion.

An immense army would be needed, and an enormous fleet would have to be available for the transport of the invading forces and their reinforcement, if the enemy was to stand the slightest chance not only to land successfully on England's soil but also to remain there. Nor would such an invasion force escape the Royal Navy which would decimate it during the crossing of the Channel, while the Royal Air Force would deal shrewd blows upon the enemy's invasion fleet.

To give an idea of how many ships would be needed for the transport of a great army, let us consider what happened at the beginning of the Chino-Japanese war. An army of a hundred thousand men was transported from Japan to China. For the operation the Japanese used one hundred warships and one hundred transport vessels. Since the ports of disembarkation were held by Chinese troops, and since the larger among the Japanese ships could not land elsewhere, the Japanese had first to be transhipped from the bigger vessels into small motor-boats specially constructed for the purpose. This transfer took place at a distance of seven to fifteen miles from the coast. The Japanese were able to overcome all these difficulties simply because the Chinese were inadequately armed. Japan held uncontested superiority in the air and on the sea whilst the Chinese coastal defences were very poor. The German Rear-Admiral Groos maintains that the ship tonnage now needed for a well-equipped modern invasion army is three to four times greater than that of a few years ago, owing to technical developments in armaments. A strong

infantry division of twenty-five thousand men would need about two hundred and forty thousand tons (gross weight): an invasion army of twenty infantry divisions would require therefore nearly five million tons of shipping. In 1938 the entire amount of tonnage at Germany's disposal was four million, two hundred and forty thousand tons.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Great Britain claims that Germany, up to August 16th, 1941, had lost two million, three hundred and twenty-one thousand tons of her tonnage, i.e. more than half she had possessed in 1938. It is hard to guess how strong the German merchant fleet is at present; but even had German shipyards worked to the height of their capacity Germany's tonnage could not be greater than in 1938.

Groos considers that only those steamers are suitable for transport of modern invasion armies which are furnished with suitable loading space, loading machinery, and strengthened decks, and not every ship can be adapted to such contrivances. At the time Mussolini was sending his armies to Abyssinia, Italy disposed of over three million tons of shipping space, but that was not sufficient and the Italians were compelled to acquire ships from other maritime nations. Whereas the Italian armada could reckon on a quiet and undisturbed passage and landing, Germany knew she had to reckon with the inconceivable adversities her armada would have to meet were she to attempt the invasion of England.

Discussing the problem of invasion, Churchill said in his speech of June 18th, 1940: 'And there would be very great possibilities, to put it mildly, that this armada would be intercepted long before it reached the coast, and all the men drowned in the sea, or, at the worst, blown to pieces with their equipment while they were trying to land. . . . We also have a great system of minefields, through which we alone know the channels. . . . If the enemy tries to sweep passages through these minefields, it will be the task of the navy to destroy the mine sweepers and any other forces employed to protect them. There should be no difficulty in this, owing to our great superiority at sea. . . . Some people seem to forget that we have a navy, but, after all, we have a navy.'

In truth, insurmountable difficulties and obstacles would have confronted Germany in any attempt to invade England. Had she tried to do so she would have had to face continuous sea battles in addition to bringing reinforcements and provisions for her troops. Germany would thus have had to maintain a shuttle of ships sailing to and from

England, ships cruelly exposed to attacks by Britain's naval and air forces.

German naval circles learned a great deal from experience during the first World War, and in this war are fighting skilfully, utilizing good strategical positions and adapting themselves elastically to prevailing conditions. But the German navy is not strong enough, and the war against England broke out much too early. Nor had she been given sufficient time to rebuild up to the strength she possessed when she entered upon the first World War. At the outset of the second World War the strength of the German navy was far below that of 1914. The Norwegian adventure was costly, and weakened her considerably. Whatever the U-boats may be able to do, they cannot act as a substitute for battleships, particularly not in respect of invasion. Apart from such considerations, Lord Halifax's observation that 'Germany had missed her great chance after the collapse of France' seems to be problematic, for an immediate invasion of England after France's fall was deemed unessential to Germany. It must not be overlooked that any invasion by sea needs long and thorough preparation. As is well known, Napoleon required a long time to prepare for his invasion. Nowadays such an invasion needs an even lengthier time of preparation. Nobody underrates Germany's prodigious war efficiency. Nevertheless it is inconceivable that Germany, after succeeding in her 'Cannae' in France, could immediately proceed to the immensely intricate operation of the invasion of Britain, all the more so since Germany possessed an inadequate merchant fleet and a weak navy.



The course of events on the eastern boundaries of the Third Reich seems to confirm all we have said about Germany's invasion problems. Germany saw that her only way out of her strategical dilemma was to wage war against Russia. Recognizing that she could not reach London by a leap over the Channel, she turned about and commenced hostilities on Russia. The same fundamental cause which led Germany to battle for Egypt lay at the root of her invasion of Russia: namely, the impossibility of landing on English soil. The supremacy of the British fleet induced Italy to try her luck in North Africa and Germany to seek her fortune in Russia.

In 1938 the German commander Heye explained with the utmost detail that Italy's sea strategy in relation to Great Britain was bad enough. Italy was thereby forced to threaten the British positions from land and not from the sea, because any operation by sea would prove futile. 'The greater part of Italy's supplies had to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar: the military and economic sea communications to Abyssinia go through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. Thus Great Britain was in a position to concentrate her naval and aerial fleets at both ends of the Mediterranean and could rely upon her very strong operational bases at these points without being compelled to use her navy in the Mediterranean itself. From her strong operational bases, Great Britain blockaded the Italian sea communications as effectively as she did during 1914 in regard to Germany, without bringing her battle fleet into action. In these circumstances she merely had to wait for the Italian offensive. Italy had to attack with strategical odds against her so as to open her outlets from the Mediterranean. During the Abyssinian conflict it was already apparent that the Italians must set about the conquest of English strategical strongholds along the Suez Canal and in Egypt by launching land attacks from Libya and Abyssinia. Further, if British naval stations were to be captured it could only be by land. If these attacks proved successful, then the sea routes would be opened to Abyssinia. Such an attempt on the part of the Italian forces might have registered some initial successes, for Great Britain was not prepared for a surprise attack. On the other hand, it is probable that England would have brought matters quickly to a head by dispatching British land and air forces by sea, air, and land from India over Arabia or from England round the Cape of Good Hope. We may presume that England would have shown herself to possess the better stamina. Italy would certainly not have been able to stand a protracted interruption to her sea communications at Gibraltar and in the Indian Ocean.'

This quotation shows what Captain Heye thought of protracted actions. As for Graziani's offensive in September 1940, Captain Heye's predictions proved correct. The Italians gained an initial success, but nothing more. Britain's temporary lack of preparedness in this theatre of war was the main reason. On December 9th British forces began a counter-offensive under General Wavell's command. Owing to changing war conditions which made it necessary to dispatch British forces to other theatres of war,

this counter-offensive could not be fully maintained. The British were unable to repulse a sudden attack of combined Italian and German armies. Thus the enemies confronted each other on Egypt's soil. Tanks and planes made the desert a field of battle. The desert, which seemed to be spaceless and timeless, lost its unchangeableness—a token of our times.



The Germans were convinced that, had they triumphed over France in the first World War, there would have been great German diplomatic successes on the Continent, since many continental states would have been impressed by Germany's victory. This German assumption proved correct after the collapse of France in the second World War. Prospects became brighter in the territories round the Mediterranean and elsewhere. The development of events made it ever more difficult to come to a conclusion over the problem of sea power versus land power.

Germany's numerical superiority in the air could not bring about a final decision in the Egyptian campaign, so the battle in the desert came to a standstill. Stabilized warfare was advantageous to Great Britain who needed time to gather new strength. By gaining time she could make her superiority at sea ever more notable. Italy was cut off from her sea communications with Abyssinia, and Britain was able to subdue the Italians in Abyssinia. Once this was done, British troops and war equipment could be sent from Abyssinia to Egypt. Moreover, American ships carrying supplies for Britain could sail the Red Sea again, since it was no longer a war zone. The threat to Egypt from Italian Abyssinia disappeared. Soon the British established themselves also in Syria, whereby they considerably improved their position. On the other hand they lost the battle for Crete. But this loss was not of such great importance in the battle for Egypt as at first it seemed. The Italian navy suffered so severely that direct communication by sea with North Africa became still more difficult, and this played havoc with Italy's forces during the Egyptian campaign. 'In the Mediterranean the enemy's losses have been particularly severe, and there is evidence that he has found it very difficult to reinforce, or even to supply, his armies on the African shores', Churchill said on November 12th, 1941. One week later British forces under the command of Sir Alan Cunningham set about attacking the Italo-German armies. This offensive aimed not only

at annihilating the tank force of the enemy, as Churchill had observed, but also at driving the Axis armies out of Africa. Though the British did not at first achieve their major aim, their military successes were for the time being considerable, despite the fact that the Axis troops under Rommel regained some positions. Taken as a whole, the course of military actions in the battle for Egypt assumed a variegated form partly owing to the attitude of the French in North Africa.

There were moments before the Egyptian campaign when Great Britain was inclined temporarily to abandon the Mediterranean. Fortunately this never happened. Though Churchill always warned his people that they must not underestimate the importance of the Mediterranean to the British Empire and the whole development of the war, he also emphasized that the Axis powers would never gain the final victory over Great Britain in this theatre of war. Roosevelt affirmed the same. Germany, too, could not entirely deny the justness of this conception. She even publicly pointed to it. It may be assumed that she did so for two reasons: firstly, she thought it wiser not to strengthen the German people's belief that 'Egypt is England's weak spot', and secondly, she was not so sure that she would eventually be victorious there. At any rate, the German Rear-Admiral Lützow published an article in the *Military Scientific Review* of March 1941 in which he expressed Germany's disappointment in the achievements of her Italian ally, and his conviction that 'the decision regarding this war will come in the Atlantic, not in the Mediterranean'. The British Prime Minister and President Roosevelt were of the same opinion, though they did not underrate the importance of military events in the Mediterranean in regard to the general course and duration of the war.

Nevertheless, this sober statement on the part of a German Rear-Admiral is remarkable. It seems readily intelligible that Churchill and Roosevelt should deem the Atlantic a decisive theatre of war, since both Great Britain and the United States of America are in a favourable position here whereas Germany had to face almost unsurmountable difficulties. As Rear-Admiral Wegener puts it: 'Naval warfare depends on two main factors, the strength of the navy and strategical strong points at sea. If one or other of these factors is lacking, there can be no sea warfare for, in the absence of a navy, naval war is finished before it is begun, and should strategical positions be needed, those who hold the better strategical

## NEW WORLD WAR—OLD PROBLEMS

positions will also hold sway over the sea routes in ever growing measure. . . . Those who do not possess such strategical positions are doomed to defeat no matter how great their marine forces may be.' In the first World War Germany lacked strategical strong points; in the second World War she lacked a strong navy. Napoleon was in very similar plight.

Rear-Admiral Wegener seems to be also a very sober critic of U-boat warfare, saying: 'Comparing Germany's strategically defensive position with that of England, U-boats cannot constitute a real menace to the sea routes of an enemy nor can they really protect Germany's communications by water and shatter a blockade. This could be done only by a navy which is in a position to operate from strategical stations.'

This was the main problem of German and Italian warfare since 'lightning war' has come to a dead end, and economic warfare has ensued. To hold sway over the seas became the most important factor of war, for 'the sea is the greatest and most important route of communications in the world. Economically, politically, and militarily no other road has its equal'. Thus did the German geographer Ratzel express himself. German historians and naval officers quoted this sentence frequently and with approval. The British Secretary of War, Anthony Eden, might have referred to this sentence, too, when he said in August 1940, at a time when many people thought England's fall inevitable, that modern wars require domination over the wealth of the world. The first and most important preliminary condition for being able to dispose of this wealth is 'naval supremacy'; it has often been proved, and will be proved once more, that sea power is a far stronger weapon than continental power, for the scope of the latter is limited.

As regards the theory that economic superiority can play the principal part in warfare against a continental power, it is plain that the whole idea is wrongheaded. Modern offensive weapons have made it obvious that only those reserves can bring about a decision on the continent which already at the outset of war were fully trained for action and able to parry the first onslaughts, thereby preventing defeat. Modern technique has rendered the time factor even more decisive than the numerical factor. Germany's enemies omitted to give due consideration to these two factors, hence their miscalculation of the immensity of the war potential which could be put into the field.

Even the most cautious of critics did not fully realize Germany's prodigious martial equipment and potential. The great German victories at the start of the second World War served to open the eyes of the whole world. Whereas there had previously been indiscriminate underestimation of Germany's war machinery, equally indiscriminating overestimation set in. But as the war has progressed, a more balanced view has come into being. War on the continent and war against Britain are absolutely different kinds of war.

Continental Europeans are landsmen in thought and sentiment. No wonder that many of them deemed Eden's emphasis on the overwhelming importance of naval supremacy sheer propaganda. Historians, by and large, did not devote much time to explaining the significance of sea power in peace and war. Eirik Hornborg states in his interesting book, *Sjøfartens roll i vaerldshistorien* (The Part Seafaring Plays in World History), published at Upsala in 1941, that 'ignorance of the history of seafaring is far more evident in historical publications than knowledge of seafaring', though 'higher culture cannot be attained without seafaring, nor can the history of the human race be written without an eye to seafaring'. Ratzel says essentially the same in his book *Sea as the Fountainhead of a People's Greatness* (published in 1900): 'By inventing ships our ancestors abandoned their character of islanders; the bridging of waters created a homogeneous society of mankind; thus one of the important tools for political domination and power was brought into being. . . . The notion "Great Power", if applied also to those powers which are only "land powers", is antiquated. Before long it will cease to exist altogether if restricted to the outworn meaning.'

Ratzel drew attention to Mahan's significant historical publications about war, which are interesting in this connection. Though once again the World War of 1914-18 proved the vast significance of sea power, this essential factor is not even yet given due attention.

It is said that mankind is strongly impressed by 'power' in itself. But this does not hold good in every circumstance. In general, people are strongly impressed by might when they are experiencing it themselves in such manifestations as the conquest of towns, provinces or countries. Sea power is not as imposing as land power, for its effects are enacted much more gradually, quietly, and remotely. Nor are the achievements of sea power as spectacular, for there are no prisoners of war, victorious

encircling movements, occupations of territory, and the like. Frank Knox, Secretary of the American Navy Department, emphasized lately that Mahan's books revolutionized the conceptions of kings and statesmen. Knox may be right, but there are exceptions. At any rate, the leading personalities of the United States as well as of Great Britain made Mahan's sentences the theoretical foundation of their practical policy. In addition Frank Knox stressed, in full agreement with all other representatives of the same strategical doctrine, that sea power has also to have strong air support nowadays. This adaptation to modern developments conforms with Mahan's critical spirit. He himself said that those act wisely who bear in mind not only things looking like one another, but also things different from one another. The brain of man is captivated by the discovery of similarities, which is one of the most agreeable mental occupations. At the same time man is inclined to resent exceptions to newly discovered parallels, and therefore either to ignore any exceptions or to refuse his approval of them. Mahan's disciple Knox obviously took these scruples to heart. He dryly observed that 'if Mahan is still right, Adolf Hitler will in the end lose the war'. The future will show how right he is. In any case, the lengthy and gnawing naval war is undoubtedly menacing the aims of the blockaded state of Germany.

Anxieties of an identical kind induced the liberal politician Friedrich Naumann, the well-known industrialist Dr. Robert Bosch, and some other leading personalities of Imperial Germany to present a memorial to Ludendorff in February 1918 the purport of which was that Germany's war aims were endangered by the further duration of war. This memorandum declared that the most important German war aim, the creation of a 'Central-Europe' which would weld the whole of German-speaking lands in one single unity, would be frustrated if war continued any longer, since Central Europe was becoming increasingly undermined from within and its economic and financial resources were dwindling with every month the war persisted. A fundamental prerequisite for the future continuance of Central Europe is the economic and financial prosperity of Germany, she being the leading State; if Germany's efficiency decayed, Turkey, Bulgaria and even Austro-Hungary would be a prey to the United States of America after the war. The United States would finance those states and thus, without striking a blow, hold a grip on them both economically and politically. Everything achieved by Germany in the

war up to date would be ruined. There were, therefore, apart from the emotional desire of the masses, sound reasons for terminating the conflict. No war indemnity, be it ever so great, could be anywhere near the financial burden imposed on Germany by the war. Great Britain was well aware of the serious consequences Germany had to face should the war continue. She was, therefore, firmly determined to carry on. Taking all these factors into consideration, it seemed a matter of urgency that Belgium should be evacuated as soon as possible, and for Germany to stand on the defensive. By doing so, Great Britain's sympathy might be enlisted for the furtherance of peace. But Ludendorff desired a victorious peace.



Naumann's conception of 'Central-Europe' does not bear comparison with National Socialist plans and ideas regarding Europe's 'new order', and this for many reasons which cannot be discussed here. Nevertheless, the problems raised by this memorandum of 1918 are wellnigh identical with those of the Third Reich. In this connection it is apt to recall Professor Duisberg's remark that Germany would find herself at the end of her economic and financial resources after such a protracted war, even should she be the uncontested victor. This eminent German scholar and economist refrained from going into particulars, but he implied that though the war might be won by force of arms, it would be lost economically, financially, and politically. Such happenings are easily imaginable. For instance in Spain, Franco from a military point of view was victorious thanks to Germany's and Italy's aid. Yet the Axis reaped very little advantage, if any, from her military effort, since Franco dared not break with England on account of Spain's geographical, economic, and financial dependency. Taking it all in all, Germany, and perhaps even to a higher degree Italy, had excellent reasons for giving a try out in Spain to their 'lightning war'. They knew that a lengthy conflict was adverse to victory, and might even make victory useless by annulling those economic, financial, technical and other preliminary conditions which are necessary for the maintenance and exploitation of victory.

Seeing that Germany needed a quick decision, it was natural to infer that the 'secret weapon or weapons', unique in their deadly effectiveness, would have been used long ago — if such technical marvels really existed.

Over-zealous reporters have described the disastrous, nay fatal, effects of German 'secret' weapons on the occasion of the conquest of Fort Eben Emael; but in the German press this conquest was referred to merely as a military success. On October 6th, 1940, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote: 'A marvel? But miracles do not happen any longer, and least of all in military undertakings where every event has its exact cause and effect.' Naturally, one state or other can get ahead of others in the mass-production of some special weapon. That happened in the first World War. But miracles? Metzsch, discussing the hopes centred on technical marvels, observed very rightly that such advantages are usually and very soon checkmated if not surpassed in times of war. Scientific research in our days is very intimately wedded to laboratories and is, so to say, common international property. Special 'secret weapons' may be of some advantage in particular military situations now and again, but as to their being unfathomable or inimitable marvels — there are no such things.

'Noble deeds showing the German spirit' bestowed benefits and distinctions upon German generals in former wars as well as in the second World War, but as early as 1931 Professor Duisberg warned the National Socialists that 'great deeds showing the German spirit needed, as in past times, so in the future free professors, free students and free universities'. Other men of note were of the same opinion. In this connection might be quoted Beutler's and others' remarks together with admonitions of a similar kind. Apparently Churchill attentively followed these manifestations within National Socialist Germany. He said in the House of Commons on August 20th, 1940: 'Since the Germans drove the Jews out and lowered their technical standards, our science is definitely ahead of theirs.' As a matter of actual fact, Jews in very good proportion shared in the former high standard of German science and technique, so that the expulsion of the Jews acted as a boomerang to Germany. But the high standard attained by German research has been endangered even more by the mysticism and irrational philosophy prevalent in Germany since 1933. The same spirit produced the persecution and expulsion of the Jews. The future will show how this will operate in the last resort. Such a spirit cannot in the long run be of advantage to a nation, especially during a protracted war. Pintschovius wrote in 1936 that mental competition is of as much importance in war as the number of military divisions; that a valuable invention can make up for an entire army. Spiritual armaments

are of even more importance than material weapons. Metzsch expressed the same thought in his terse style: 'Study and military barracks must march along side by side, a combination of Goethe's *Faust* and fists.'

Great Britain's and America's opportunities in respect of German science and technique are not less to-day than during the first World War. But it may happen now and again that raw materials and workmen are not available though they are urgently needed for the military utilization of technical devices. The history of tank development is a case in point. Naturally those states which have the whole world market at their disposal run a better chance of getting all the raw materials they need. The German military politician Paul Wiel, in his publication *War and Economy* (1938), very rightly remarks that 'the war economy of a state is both in general and in detail as strong as is its weakest point. If there is a shortage of a certain substance in the make-up of a chemical synthesis, the total production depends on the amount of the scarcity of this available substance. Explosives were the pacemakers for munition production in Germany during the first World War. Substances which are in themselves of minor value may become decisively important . . . ; it is useless to appraise the economic situation of a state or to calculate the quantity of its production if this state's "weakest points" are unknown.'

It was learned during the first World War that even the most conscientious statisticians cannot grasp all the manifold and changing requirements of war. From a study of statistics Germany thought she needed to restrict her consumption of ordinary provisions by a mere 20 per cent in order to support herself by independent production. But as a matter of fact (as is universally known) things went quite otherwise during the first World War, and are now being repeated. If the national economy and still more the economy of a whole continent is isolated from world economy, and if in addition there are millions of armed men to cater for, the situation changes entirely and gets out of gear. If the raw material required in the textile industry fails to be imported, more flax must be cultivated at home to replace the missing article and sheep breeding has to be intensified. But increased cultivation of flax means cutting down the area of grain cultivation, and greater sheep breeding needs more pasture land at the cost of agriculture. If leather cannot be brought in from abroad more cattle must be slaughtered, entailing a diminution of livestock, which in its turn means less meat and milk.

## NEW WORLD WAR—OLD PROBLEMS

In the absence of meat and milk, more grain, potato and vegetable crops have to be grown. Potatoes are utilized in the production of alcohol for motor fuel. Thus if more motor spirit is needed, more potatoes must be used for the production of alcohol and less for human consumption. Milk, too, is utilized in the manufacture of plastic materials for aircraft. Therefore less milk is available for human consumption. Fats are needed in great quantities for producing explosives, and are consequently less available as food and for other purposes. Fat restriction means a shortage of soap; soap substitutes mean bad nursing as well as a speedier wearing out of washable clothing and increased consumption. Though coffee is considered a luxury people want it, so for it has to be substituted the use of rye, barley, etc., i.e. other victuals. It is the same tale with other luxury provisions. Coffee and tobacco add to the comforts of life, and to be deprived of them reacts unfavourably upon the workers and their efforts. All these things were learned during the first World War. The vicious circle is of general importance.

The modern worker in our industrialized age is a far more differentiated person than that of a former generation, and if he cannot obtain the small joys and delights of life his reactions and effort are not the same as under ordinary conditions. This is especially so at times when the people's nerves are taut by air raids and by bombs—as is the case in the second World War. But the German workman did not get sufficient victuals even before the outbreak of war, and he was in addition overstrained. Major Thomas issued a warning to the effect that there was a diminution in the joy of life and a decay in people's efficiency. As a matter of course, a sixty-hour working week stretched over a considerable period inevitably leads to fatigue, both physical and mental.

Thomas's warning went unheeded because workmen were scarce. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* of January 24th, 1939, wrote that 'there is a visible decline in the results from agriculture in certain areas already'. In the meantime the problem of shortage of labour grew ever more acute, and is destined to become more critical the longer war lasts. Blockaded Germany has to depend on substitutes of very many kinds, and every economic system which has to rely on substitutes engenders a specially high working strain. On the other hand, blockaded Germany is in a position to enforce labour from other lands, though this is only a relatively small part of the globe, but the working conditions are neither just

nor favourable to the economic and social order. Further, an economic system based on substitutes has to be scrupulously controlled, since in many cases the production of substitutes only means using up one raw material in lieu of another. Major Hesse points to this fact in his book *The War Economic Idea*, published in 1935. Though Lieutenant-General Metzsch was fully convinced of the fabulous efficiency of the German chemical industry, he was also aware of its limits. His dictum, 'Germany can only be victorious by dealing shrewder blows, never by possessing better stamina', would seem to endorse this assumption.

Supposing that the war economists Thomas and Beutler as well as other critics of the National Socialist economic policy are right, we may assume that the dynamics of the war economy of the Third Reich, when protracted, are inferior to what Imperial Germany could dispose of. In this connection it is interesting to draw the reader's attention to the opinion expressed in the 'Reichsarchiv' about the war-time armament and war economy of Germany at the time of the first World War. It says approximately the following: Even if the German authorities had never conceived the idea of a short war and if they had prepared for a longer-lasting war (which they never did) they might at least have taken the only efficacious measure, which was to lay in a goodly store of provisions, foodstuffs, raw materials, etc., with a view to four and a half years of hostilities. Such a measure might have checked, if not considerably weakened, the development of peace-time economy, though Germany's financial situation would have been profoundly shaken. A sound peace-time economy is the most important prerequisite to effective war economy.

This point of view is the predominant feature of German literature at that date. But the Third Reich's point of view is quite different. Nevertheless, the National Socialist war economy held good in so far as it secured Germany an enormous advantage in armaments; and this procured her great conquests in the earlier days of the second World War. But every conquest in Europe, and more especially in the West, is dubious, and for two reasons. Firstly, neither Germany nor any other European nation can exist for long without sea communications. Secondly, military occupation of foreign lands disturbs the economy of those nations, for the nationals of each country put up a passive resistance, by sabotage and guerrilla fighting, etc. In addition, damages caused by

military action impede the conqueror. Our modern economy is a very subtle and complicated mechanism. On the one hand it is able to adapt itself easily to changing conditions, whilst on the other hand it is much more sensitive than that which existed in Napoleonic days. The European continental power which fights against Great Britain faces incomparably more thorny economic problems nowadays. Not only economy but also mankind has become more differentiated, more complicated and, in many respects, more sensitive. In general, the personal, social, and national consciousness of Europe has grown considerably.

Rear-Admiral Wegener, whose work *Sea Strategy during the World War* has been previously cited, is certainly right from the point of view of sea strategy in claiming the military necessity of invading Denmark and Norway. His assumption that the occupation of these northern lands would enable Germany to cut Great Britain off from her sea communications with Scandinavia and therewith to hold control of this sea route is disproved. While theoretically practicable, at the same time it hampers Germany more than her enemy England. As early as April 11th, 1940, Churchill called Germany's invasion of Scandinavia a political and strategical blunder, and he contended that this would double the effectiveness of the blockade.

Imperial Germany derived very considerable benefit from the neutrality of the Scandinavian countries as well as from that of other countries, and was thus in a position to relieve her own economic situation during the first World War. Though official German statistics of export trade for the years 1914-18 were never published, comprehensive accounts of Germany's export trade regarding this period were given as early as 1919 by Dr. Helfferich. He was one of the directors of the Reich Bank, and his work was later completed by others. In his book *The World War*, Helfferich revealed, at a time when his disclosures could be made without prejudice to Germany's interests, that during the war Germany had maintained her imports by the help of neutral states in very much greater measure than outsiders had imagined. Germany's imports amounted to 10,800,000 marks in 1913, to 7,100,000 in 1914, and to 8,400,000 in 1916. But it has to be remembered that the decline of imports was in fact much greater than might be supposed by these figures, because they do not take into consideration the rise in prices. Nevertheless, German imports kept

## THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

at a fairly high level until 1917, when Britain's blockade was fully applied.

The importation of butter into Germany was not only maintained at the 1913 height but was even increased by supplies from the neutral states of Holland and Denmark during the early years of the first World War, though the Russian market for butter, which before the war amounted to more than half of Germany's total importation of butter, had come to a standstill. Germany's importation of butter rose from 54,200 tons in 1913 to 68,500 tons in 1915. In the same period importation of pork, including ham, rose from 21,600 to 98,200 tons, that of cheese from 26,300 in 1913 to 67,300 tons in 1915. Thus, according to Helfferich, the importation of this commodity had more than doubled its peace-time quota.

Captain Metzenthin, in his article 'Economic War and Neutrality', investigated the importance of Scandinavia as a source of Germany's food supply, and, partly relying on Helfferich's figures, gave the following estimate:

<i>Importation of Food to Germany</i> (in millions of marks)				
	1913	1915	1916	1917
From Sweden ..	38	105	92	18
From Norway ..	77	168	200	102
From Denmark ..	135	283	327	207
Totals ..	250	556	619	327

This favourable development was possible because the Scandinavian states remained neutral and were able to maintain their sea communications undisturbed for a long time. Scandinavia would not have been able to supply Germany with two-and-a-half times more meat, cattle, milk, butter, cheese, eggs, etc. in 1916, compared with 1913, neither could Denmark have been able to increase her supply of butter to Germany from 2,000 to 25,000 tons during the first two years of the 1914-18 war, had these states not received large quantities of fodder from abroad. Later on Great Britain's pressure upon the neutral states increased. Supplies of fodder to them became increasingly and more severely rationed. The repercussions on Germany's home market were obviously disadvantageous to the Central Powers as may be seen from the above table.

Germany was thus faced with exhaustion so far as her supplies from neutral sources were concerned. This became manifest towards the close of 1916 when reliance upon supplies from the Scandinavian countries was of the utmost importance to the stability of Germany's economic situation. The German military economist Paul Wiel makes the following statement about this matter in his book *War and Economy*: 'Denmark's export of cattle to Germany rose from 150,000 head in 1913 to 305,206 head in 1916 and to 300,339 head in 1917. Importation of fodder from Denmark rose in like measure. Germany was supplied also with tea, cocoa, and coffee—important as restoratives and tonics, needed by the German troops—by way of neutral states. For instance, Denmark was supplied with 150 grammes of tea per capita of her population in 1913, but this was trebled in 1915 and 1916. Supplies of cocoa to Scandinavia and Denmark doubled from 1913 to 1917; coffee imports rose considerably as well. According to her own statistics Scandinavia exported coffee to Germany and Austria to the amount of 1,800,288 lbs. in 1914, 8,133,308 lbs. in 1915, and 11,062,136 lbs. in 1916. Sweden exported 526,760 lbs. of cotton to Germany in 1913, and four to five times more in 1915, according to Swedish estimates.' These instances must suffice.

Incidentally, until she entered the war against Germany the neutrality of the United States worked out favourably for Germany during the first World War. American ships brought cotton directly to Bremen in those earlier days, and when that in the end became impossible, large quantities of cotton came from the United States of America to Germany via Scandinavia.

When the first World War was over, the British realized that victory could have been achieved much earlier if she had placed a severer blockade upon Germany from the very outset. Especially did Admiral Consett, who was British Naval Attaché to the North European States at that time, champion this opinion in his book *The Triumph of Unarmed Forces*. Herein he cited figures which bore on the transit trade of the North European States and claimed that Germany would not have been able to hold her own, as she did *de facto*, had she not been privileged to enjoy this transit trade for a long time. Further, a stricter blockade would have been advantageous to Great Britain herself, even should such a policy have induced Germany to occupy Denmark and drawn Sweden into closer

relationship. The British Isles might have had to endure certain economic losses in such an event, but these disadvantages would have been temporary. On the other hand Danish and Swedish coasts would have become enemy territory, so that Germany would have been completely cut off from her vital supplies. This is the gist of Consett's book.

Captain Metzenthin's notions are very similar, for he says that 'it appears not unlikely that Germany's food situation would have become that of famine early in the summer of 1916, and thus brought about her downfall at home and on the front lines had she not received supplies from Scandinavia, Holland, and Rumania'.

Metzenthin laid stress on the fact that Germany's neutral neighbours could not afford to sacrifice their trade relations both with the Allied nations and with the Central Powers if they were to maintain a tolerable position in their economic life. This condition constituted one of the main factors in their help to Germany's war economy for as long a period as they actually did.

Helfferrich and many others comforted themselves and their German compatriots with the successful issue of Germany's policy by declaring that Great Britain had not effectively blockaded the Central Powers at the outset of the war, nor had she been able to paralyse the transit trade to Germany.

Wegener's considerations were based more on sea strategy than were those of Admiral Consett, whose principal idea was an intensification and a protraction of the blockade by means of sea power. Churchill and the British Admiralty shared this view in April 1940. Soon after Churchill's over-optimistic utterances, British troops evacuated Norway. This raised violent criticism on the British conduct of the war. But Churchill, who became Prime Minister some days after this event, declared on May 8th, 1940, in his capacity as First Lord of the Admiralty, which post he had occupied since September 3rd, 1939: 'I must say that I cannot recede at all from the statement I made, which has been much criticized, that this invasion of Norway by Hitler has been a cardinal political and strategic error.'

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The blow dealt to Norway would have been decisive so far as Great Britain was concerned on the sole condition that Germany could bring

the second World War to a successful issue in the shortest possible time. But this has been beyond her power. Whether Germany could have enjoyed the same advantages from Denmark's and Norway's neutrality in the second World War as she did in the first is questionable. Certain reasons lead one to believe the answer to be in the negative. Nevertheless, the occupation of these countries involuntarily helped Great Britain in her aim to render the blockade against Germany as effective as possible. Moreover, Britain gained 3,800,000 tons of shipping by Germany's invasion of these countries. It is probable that Germany's chances in the great battle of the Atlantic were undermined rather than improved by her action in thus ruthlessly laying her hands on good maritime positions in Northern Europe.

During the first World War Moltke, as commander-in-chief, decided not to march through Holland, as his predecessor Schlieffen had planned, and this proved a boon to Germany's war economy, since the conflict was a protracted one. Holland exported 76,200 tons of cheese to Germany in 1916, compared with 63,300 tons in 1915 and 16,100 tons in 1913; Holland's export of butter to Germany amounted to 19,000 tons in 1913, to 36,700 tons in 1915, and to 31,500 tons in 1916. The pessimistically inclined Moltke obviously counted upon considerable war economic difficulties and for this reason was determined to respect Holland's neutrality in any circumstances. He probably thought Holland a useful go-between for transit trade with the United States of America.

As things were in 1940, Germany could from the outset reckon on deriving as advantageous an economic situation from occupied and therefore blockaded Holland as she had from neutral Holland during the first World War up to 1916. Great Britain in the present war had not only another valuable ally but also a considerable accretion of shipping through Germany's occupation of Holland. It may be that Germany knew from the outset that the blockade would under the auspices of Anglo-American collaboration be of a very much stricter kind than it had been during the first World War. If this surmise be correct, Germany did not think it worth her while to gain some imaginary economic advantages from a neutral Holland instead of almost certainly winning important strategic positions in the Netherlands, strategic positions which held the possibility of a quick decision in view of the parlous situation in France. Such strategical advantages as Holland possessed would reflect on the attack

against the United Kingdom. As a matter of fact, after her defeats on the Continent, Great Britain was hard put to it to maintain her strict blockade against Germany.

Though the first World War differed greatly from the second, there is one thing in common with both: mercantile and hunger blockade. 'This rendered Central Europe a besieged fortress in 1914-18, the condition of which could be somewhat eased in one way or the other, but could not be changed fundamentally', as Helfferich bluntly puts it.

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Germany can place much greater military successes to her account this time than in the first World War, but both in the first World War as in the second she took possession of the most important industrial provinces in the West and of Polish manufacturing districts, so that she gained considerable quantities of diverse raw materials and of half-fabricated textiles. This was favourable to her, of course, 'but the occupation of provinces in the West and East did not bring relief to Germany's food situation. The densely populated countries of Belgium and northern France needed additional provisions in the way of food. Even in peace-time Poland's agricultural products did not suffice for the maintenance of her own people. Yet the so-called Relief Commission, working under the patronage of the United States and Spain, released Germany from the obligation of feeding the population of occupied Belgium and northern France. Germany was bound by definite undertakings not to use any food provided by these relief imports for her own needs and to reserve Belgium's agricultural products for the use of the Belgians themselves. In this way Germany was relieved from the dilemma of either providing the populations of occupied provinces with supplies out of her own sparse stocks, or of exposing many millions of people in the rear of her fighting forces to famine. At any rate, the occupied provinces did help to relieve Germany's food situation.' This is what Helfferich reported upon the matter.

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During the second World War the food problem is as urgent as before, and has had bad repercussions on industrial capacity for work in occupied countries. The difficulties entailed have been added to by the National

Socialist attitude towards occupied countries. In 1914 the Belgian government, which had taken refuge in Le Havre, informed the leaders of the Belgian mining industry that it had no objection to the continuation of hauling and to the collaboration of Belgian miners with the German authorities. 'This permit issued by the Belgian government to the Belgian people led to important economic consequences connected with the war', Weil wrote. But during the second conflict the Belgian government, which fled to London, represents quite a different point of view. High tension continued between the population and the authorities of occupation, not only in Belgium but also in other occupied countries.

It seems worthy of note that the rich strata of Briey and Lorraine had never been systematically bombed in the first World War, though France could have done so easily. The Germans in their turn treated the French pits with indulgence in spite of the fact that they were only ten miles from the German front line. After the war there was much discussion about this in the French Chamber of Deputies. It was alleged that there had been a secret agreement between French and German ironmasters and the French general staff with a view to preventing the destruction of their respective industrial plants. Be this as it may, the British bombers have not treated 'with indulgence' the industrial plants under German control in the second World War.

Though air forces did not play so outstanding a part in warfare at the time of the first World War as they do now, though the population of German occupied countries was tolerably well nourished then, and though political tension in occupied countries was very much less pronounced than it is nowadays, etc., 'highly industrialized Belgium was not as useful to Germany as it should have been', Weil stated after the 1914-18 war. He pointed out in this connection that in general the economy of occupied countries can never be fully exploited in favour of the occupying power because of political, social, and economic conditions, difference in the administration of justice, and tradition in general. The following passage is italicized in the work referred to: 'Conquest of an economically valuable province is invariably a greater loss for the conquered than an asset to the conqueror'. All these considerations conform to practical experiences gathered during the first World War, where real production in the occupied countries amounted to only a small proportion of that which had

been so eagerly expected. In 1915 and in the spring of 1916 Germany concluded an agreement with Rumania according to which the latter had to supply Germany with twenty-seven million tons of grain. This quantity of grain was actually delivered to Germany. But after Rumania was invaded and conquered by Germany, it became impossible for Germany to obtain the same quantity. Though the enemy suffers big losses, genuine advantages from the exploitation of conquered areas for the benefit of the conqueror are highly problematical. Many difficulties stand in the way. For one thing existing traffic organization in the conquered country might be so arranged that it moved in directions contrary to that which the victor needed for the bringing up of equipment and so forth. This became amply evident in the Ukraine when, after that country was overrun, the grain had either to be moved to Germany or to Central Europe. Furthermore, the conquest of a country shakes its economic life. Passive resistance invariably sets in in a conquered province. We have seen this happen in Poland, Belgium, and northern France. It was for these reasons that only about 25 per cent of the normal output of coal could be attained from the mines of northern France — an area two-thirds of which was occupied by Germany in the first World War — and in the pits of Briey, which were in German hands from the beginning of the first World War until the armistice. Metzenthin among others is responsible for these statements. It is impossible to guess for how long a time and in what measure the lowering of production in war-time can be held up by ruthless means. Experience gathered from the first World War shows clearly that industrial production depends to a wide extent on prevailing food conditions as well as on the morale of the workers in general. Production in blockaded Germany sank considerably owing to the growth of political tension between the imperial government and the working class. In the first World War a shrinkage of Germany's production was far more intensive than that of England. Germany's production of crude iron sank from nineteen million tons in 1913 to twelve millions in 1918, whereas Great Britain's production of crude iron sank from ten million tons to nine millions in the same period. Germany's production of crude steel went down from seventeen to twelve million tons, while England's production of the same commodity rose from eight to ten million tons. Extraction of iron ore fell from thirty-six million tons in 1913 to twenty-two million in 1918 in

Germany. It is not difficult to draw conclusions from such figures. Not one of the blockaded countries is in a position to keep up its normal peace-time production, whether it be conquered or not.

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Germany's agricultural production per acre was even more affected during the first World War than her industrial production. Her crops of rye and wheat amounted to 16.5 million tons in 1913, but only to 9.2 millions in 1917. Her crops of barley amounted to 3.6 million tons in 1913, but only to two millions in 1917. The oat crop went down from 9.5 million tons to 3.6 millions in the same period. Potato crops decreased from 54 million tons in 1913 to 25 millions in 1916, but rose to 34.4 millions in 1917, only to fall again to 29.5 million tons in 1918. The higher yield from agriculture is possible only if every available peace-time method is conscientiously utilized. During a war it is to be expected that deterioration of cultivated areas is likely to ensue in blockaded states. Countries where relatively less intensive agricultural activities are prevalent suffer less than their industrial neighbours. Russia's corn crops were not up to the peace-time standard in 1916, but the bad food situation which prevailed was due rather to failure of organization and insufficiency of rail traffic. During the many years of war, Russia's transport of grain never reached peace-time level. Taking the figure 100 as a basis of the monthly haulage of grain in 1913, the respective figures were in 1914, 72 in July, 35 in August, 47 in September, 58 in October, and 53 in November. The average of Russia's grain transport during the war amounted to about 60 per cent of the peace-time figure. Enemy invaders of Russia had to meet with still greater transport difficulties than the Russians themselves, and had to meet them again in the second World War. But apart from all this, Germans who invaded and occupied very productive agricultural Russian territory in this war could not maintain production, since between the two wars agriculture has been mechanized. The invader was thus compelled to make a shot at capturing the oilfields of the Caucasus and utilizing the petrol adequately. Only the future can decide as to whether this assumption be true or not. Nevertheless it is feasible to imagine that the Germans did their utmost to get from the Ukraine as much grain as possible. They were forced to do so because their food problem is no less urgent nowadays than it was in the

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first World War. Germany's comprehensive conquests in northern and western Europe rendered her food problem a question of vital importance.

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Considering blockaded Germany's condition in the second World War her decision to march against Russia was a foregone conclusion. All the gaps in the blockade of the first World War were firmly sealed by Germany's conquests in northern and western Europe. In this way she deprived herself of every possible help through neutral channels. Further it may be noted that the Germans marched against Russia and into Russia in the twenty-second month of the second World War, whereas they invaded Russia only in the forty-third month after the outbreak of the first.

By conquering nations which remained neutral during the first World War Germany deprived herself of important advantages. It does not seem so certain that territorial gains bring an augmentation of power in every circumstance.

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Dr. Ferdinand Friedensburg, one of the most notable German political economists, published a book entitled *The Mineral Treasure of Land as a Factor of Universal Political and Military Power* (1936). Herein he deals with the problems of autarchy. According to him, the autarchic activities of Germany, Italy, and Japan made scant change in their dependence on world economy as is demonstrated by the mining industry. Since autarchic aims in these countries cannot be achieved within their existing boundaries, they have to expand and incorporate more areas rich in raw materials if the purpose of being self-supporting and being able to manufacture home products is to be achieved. But all these objectives are cluttered up by sentimental considerations of national honour and are more or less unknown to the majority of the nations concerned, because a veil has been drawn over their eyes and propaganda has been fairly skilful. At any rate, material political objectives are not allowed to be made public nowadays, Friedensburg writes. Further, he points out that expansion on the part of Germany, Italy, and Japan occasions prodigious tensions, and seriously endangers world peace. These three powers are therefore imperialistic and martial. Should a protracted war ensue they

would be in a poor economic situation, even were they able to place considerable victories on the battlefield to their credit.

A German captain, T. Arps, wrote in 1938 that Japan could not afford to be on unfriendly or hostile terms with the great neighbouring states in the Pacific because she depends on imports from abroad to the tune of 60 per cent. Japan has to import ore, metal, workable coal, wool, cotton and, above all, petrol, for she either does not possess these raw materials or has them only in small quantities. In 1935 Japan got 75 per cent of the petrol she needed from America, 11 per cent from the Dutch Indies, and 6 per cent from British India. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the United States prohibited the export of certain goods some time before the outbreak of war. This may be assumed to have been a warning to Japan.

With regard to economic and general political activities it seemed reasonable to assume that Japan would aim at a compromise with the United States, the more so since Japan had been engaged in military operations on the Asiatic continent for over ten years and her national debt was rising steadily. On the other hand, it is reasonable to suppose that the Japanese, who were called the 'Prussians of the Far East', would always be tempted to wage war on the United States unless the existing military system of America was completely changed. Taking it all in all, the position of Japan seems to afford an apt instance that inner political affairs can conjure up actions which for economical and other reasons would otherwise be considered too dangerous.



A further example is provided by Fascist Italy. Among many others Alfred Rosenberg, the National Socialist theorist in matters of foreign policy, was of opinion that Italy was not in a strategic or economic position to engage in a hostile policy towards England. Italy depends, as she always has, on sea routes which are under British control. One allusion may suffice to explain this. Italy unloaded twenty million tons of goods in 1938. Only 10 per cent of these goods came from Mediterranean territories: roughly 5 per cent via the Dardanelles; 5½ per cent through the Suez Canal; and 79 per cent by way of Gibraltar. According to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of May 1940, 41 per cent of textiles, 46 per cent of provisions, 50 per cent of ore and metal, and 70 per cent of petrol had to

be brought to Italy from abroad and had to pass Gibraltar, a tightly closed door so far as Italy was concerned since the outbreak of the war.

Italy, though poor in raw materials, is rich in rash ideas about lightning wars. The Italian commodore Ulisse Guadagnini advocated, for instance, a 'surprise war' — surprise in the sense of a burglar's unexpected attack, as interpreted by Lieutenant-Colonel Rocco Moretta. He laboured under the notion that the enemy's navy could be destroyed within one hour if thus taken by surprise. Landing on the enemy's shores would then be child's play; small harbours would be easily occupied by special naval troops, and by spies who had cut off the land communications beforehand. All these things would happen if only a country could be penetrated and overrun in the full tide of peace. Douhet, a fanatic of air warfare, revelled in the axiom that three hundred tons of well-placed bombs would suffice to win a war within four weeks. With regard to Douhet, the proverb that 'a prophet has no honour in his own country' was given the lie, for 'belligerent Italy', as that country was called by Mussolini, did care very much for the idea. Germany was more sceptical regarding Douhet's optimistic ideas, though Germany's industrial, financial, and technical conditions for the full utilization of a mighty air force — not to mention the personnel she disposed of — were far more favourable than those of Italy. Still, so far as Italy's general rearmament plans were concerned, Douhet's ideas did not and could not bring much influence to bear, although anybody who held out a prospect of a short war and of quick victory was favourably regarded, be his schemes ever so problematic.

Though Italy never admitted it, she did in fact realize the enormous gulf lying between her ostentatious political aspirations and her small war potentiality. Nevertheless strategic magic intoxicated her, and the gulf was thus bridged by imagination. Fantastic strategic ideas sprang from a soil which is not otherwise productive or of great intrinsic value. So Italy was proclaimed by the Fascists to be the sacred mother country of a paramount Fascist Imperium. There was much talk about mobile warfare as being the only appropriate one suited to the dynamic character of Fascism. But such empty chatter merely clouded the sober arithmetical equation that Italy was short of raw materials. General Pariani, Secretary of State to the Italian Ministry for War, an extraordinarily passionate believer in the strategy of quick decisions, wrote in the *Popolo d'Italia*:

'Italy has no abundant reserves of raw material and can therefore not think of a long-lasting war which requires such enormous equipment.' And the Under-Secretary of War, Baistrocchi, declared in the Italian Chamber of Deputies on March 21st, 1935: 'Our war has to be a mobile war, for the material conditions of our country urgently demand it.' This caused Mussolini to become ever more irritated during his Abyssinian campaign every time he reflected on the impending danger of interference by the League of Nations and Great Britain in his war of conquest. He urged General de Bono to speed up military operations, quite correctly stressing the fact that 'time is working against us'. Disappointed at de Bono's slow progress, Mussolini dismissed him and replaced him by Badoglio; and Badoglio, racing for time, had recourse to — mustard gas.

Curiously enough Italy had to rely on 'lightning' war even more than Germany, though she is far less able to wage such a war than her partner, for she lacks every strategical preliminary condition for lightning war. Italy is mainly an agrarian state; her industry consists to a great extent of small and medium-sized factories. This is illustrated by the fact that only one and a half million workers are engaged in factories which employ over two hundred and fifty men. About 20 per cent of Italians are illiterate. Every tenth soldier in the army can neither read nor write. A thoroughly qualified German worker and soldier is like Siamese twins. General conditions and the effects of a highly developed national industry play a greater part in increasing a nation's military effectiveness than any amount of military training in barracks. The higher the cultural standard of the population the better prospects for its military education. The province of Piedmont in northern Italy, one of the most cultured Italian provinces, can plume itself on producing far better officers and soldiers than the provinces of southern Italy which are less developed. It was, therefore, obvious that Italy could not perform a fraction of what her German partner was able to accomplish. Lieutenant-General Metzsch, like many other Germans, was extremely sceptical as to Italy's military efficiency. He wrote in 1935: 'Concrete can be hardened within a very short space of time; human beings need a much longer time for the hardening process . . . Whether it is possible to convert a soft Neapolitan into a hard Piedmontese, Mussolini alone can tell us.'

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Such remarks seem to hint at a criticism of National Socialist foreign policy, and the same may be said as to Italy's war economic and strategical position. Apart from other reasons, irritability caused by such remarks was responsible for the fact that large numbers of Italians failed to appreciate the Duce's alliance with Germany. It was not by chance that Italy came into the war rather late in the day and at a moment when victory seemed to be already won. Later on, when this victory proved to be a mirage, the possibility of Italy signing a separate peace was often discussed. But by then the situation bristled with difficulties. The Italians were unable to put their wishful dreaming to account. Nevertheless there were some factors which spoke in favour of such a proposal. It may be mentioned in passing that Germany aimed at a speedy victory on the western front because in addition to other reasons she had to keep an eye on Italy. Moreover responsible leadership in Germany seemed to be aware of the fact that the hurriedly improvised friendship with Russia was not well founded and was too dubious to stand the strain of a long-lasting war. Prominent personalities in Germany realized that the time factor was on the side of the United Nations to an even greater extent than it had been during the first World War. Many details of the later conflict differed from those existing during the 1914-18 war, but the cardinal problems are the same. Above all does this apply to U-boat warfare and to the attitude of the United States of America.

Almost identical words were uttered when the U-boat campaign started in the first World War as were said by Raeder, the German Admiral of the fleet, on January 28th, 1941: 'And so we face the fact that England is inevitably nearing her downfall. No power in the world can prevent this fate. England is beyond help. Any aid which may come from abroad is too late to save her in view of the heavy blows Germany is dealing her.'

Soon afterwards Hitler proclaimed his devastating U-boat onslaught against Great Britain for the spring of 1941. But from now onward complete silence was observed about an invasion of England.

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From the Napoleonic epoch until to-day continental powers have considered economic war one of their most effective weapons, and for the second time within a century England's enemy, placed all his hopes on relentless U-boat warfare.

On January 29th, 1917, Dr. Gustav Stresemann, who was not a particularly moderate politician at that time, nor yet the wise advocate of a peaceful policy he became in subsequent years, said in an interesting speech: 'World history is prone to repetitions.' Though he stressed the many parallels of Napoleon's time and his own, he believed in quite a different outcome, basing his belief upon German naval strength and the U-boats. 'Napoleon dispensed with Fulton, whom he called a madman with Utopian ideas, when the latter offered to build steamships and submarine boats. To quote Napoleon's own words: "This man proposed that I ought to sail to England by heated kitchen-pots." But nowadays we have real steamers and U-boats, which have been built by steeled German hearts and with German steel. Hundreds of thousands of tons of enemy shipping have been sent to the bottom of the sea every month by German U-boats.'

In spite of such boasts, the result of the 1914-18 war was identical with that of Napoleon. And the second World War will end in the same manner. There is evidence that U-boat warfare is more problematic and more hazardous now than it was twenty-five years ago. For one thing, the tonnage of the world's mercantile marine was 50 per cent greater in June 1939 than in June 1914, and though this growth cannot be wholly placed to Britain's account, it is clear that, directly and indirectly, the greater part of this increase was of benefit to Great Britain. Also, since the first World War the speed of many ships has increased considerably. This factor meant additional shipping space. Every German conquest on the continent brought the United Kingdom additional shipping and Germany was helpless to prevent it. Consequently, the British mercantile marine was by no means so imperilled though its losses in the course of the second World War have been considerable. Besides, the United States mercantile marine is far greater than in 1914. Nor must it be forgotten that Great Britain learned quite as much as Germany from the experiences gained during the first World War. The U-boats sank no greater number of merchantmen than they did in the first World War. Furthermore, ships can if necessary be constructed in shorter time than they were in 1914-18. President Roosevelt's intimate adviser, Harry Hopkins, declared in London in July 1941 that the United States had embarked on the greatest programme of shipbuilding ever planned by any nation of the world. By 1941 no less than a million tons were to be launched; by 1942 six million tons; and by 1943 even more was expected. Hopkins declared

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that the output for 1942 would be nearly two millions higher than the highest figure in any one year in the first World War. Meanwhile, the United States had undertaken still greater tasks regarding shipbuilding. On January 6th, 1942, President Roosevelt said in his speech to Congress that, among other increases of production, building of merchantmen was to be enormously speeded up 'so that eight million tons would be built in 1942, whereas a million only were built in 1941 and it will be possible to build ten million tons in 1943'. 'Ships mean guns, ships mean bread, ships mean victory', Lloyd George said in his time; and the same held good for the United Kingdom and the United States later.

The sinking of ships never reached the figures of 1917, in spite of Germany's favourable strategic position and her large air force. It is interesting to note that the Luftwaffe claimed 30 per cent of tonnage sunk. An official German statement gave the following figures:

	1917	1941
February	781,000 tons	740,000 tons
March	885,000 "	718,000 "
April	1,091,000 "	1,000,000 "
May	869,000 "	746,000 "
June	1,016,000 "	769,000 "
July	811,000 "	408,000 "

The statement comprises those months which ought to have been the decisive or probably decisive ones. It may be said that the German figures for sinkings in August, September, and October 1941 were still more unfavourable to Germany than those in the corresponding time of the year 1917. According to Churchill, sinkings did rise in 1942. But sinkings would have had to increase considerably, to astronomical figures, if Germany was to have any prospect of achieving her aims by U-boat warfare. The co-operation of the British with the American navy in new measures of offence against the U-boat and the occupation of strategic positions by the United States in Greenland and Iceland, and the shifting of the ratio of strength in the air in favour of the Allies, destroyed Germany's chances in the battle of the Atlantic.

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As for the food situation in Britain, huge emergency stocks were built up so that her people would have 'the better stamina' in comparison with

Germany. Apart from these stocks and the strong will of the British people, Great Britain was on the whole in a better position regarding food than Germany, because the latter's population had in some measure been underfed for some years before the outbreak of war, due to the National Socialist policy of autarchy by which Germany, as it were, blockaded herself in advance. Besides, Germany was so wholly obsessed with the idea of rearmament that the slogan became current: 'Guns in place of butter.' From the standpoint of a 'lightning' war this principle was correct, but was liable to lead to serious consequences in the event of a protracted war. It cannot be denied that Germany organized her war economy admirably and that she paid every attention to the possible needs so far as they could be anticipated in view of the projected war. This cannot be said of her preparations for the first World War. The perfection of this organization may have been somewhat overrated, otherwise Germany would have made still more provision for all eventualities of a protracted war. For one thing, she would have seen to it that there was a sufficiency of winter clothing for her soldiers fighting in Russia. The energetic appeal to the German people to sacrifice its clothes for the sake of German troops which had to endure the bitter cold of the Russian winter was evidence of a gap in the organization.



These factors, which were well known and appreciated in the British Isles, have a valuable influence on morale. The consciousness of having once before subdued the enemy was, when faced by overwhelming odds, of great psychological importance. Beneficial for the Britons, the same knowledge, if only partly appreciated by the Germans, is detrimental to their morale in the long run, for they cannot get rid of the feeling that though they have had great successes they have lost the war as they did the previous one. It seems to be mostly for this reason that German propaganda was repeatedly holding out prospects of an early victory. Only thus could Germany check the anxiety of her population in respect of the United States. But the longer the war lasted and the hope of a quick decision against Great Britain disappeared, the greater grew the dread of America, and for good reasons.

In a speech on December 29th, 1940, President Roosevelt emphasized that the United States of America would become the arsenal of democracy,

and that no dictator in the world and no alliance of dictators could modify this determination. And on January 6th, 1941, Roosevelt declared in a message to the American Congress that the United States of America would never acknowledge a peace dictated by the aggressor, and for the first time in her history America introduced universal compulsory military service before she entered a war, following England in this example.



The preparations of the U.S.A. before the present conflict differed entirely from those made during the 1914-18 war. This time she began early to place production on a war basis, constructing arms of every sort—tanks, guns, planes, etc.—while increasing the multitude of her battleships and merchantmen. The co-operation between Germany and Japan held a double menace for her and closely linked her fate with that of Great Britain. This collaboration between the two great western powers helped to speed up preparatory measures. The U.S.A. were able to supply themselves with all the necessary materials in good time, whereas even late during the last war a great deal of material had still to be imported.

Relations between Germany and the U.S.A. were and are not merely a problem of military expediency. Let us suppose that Germany had succeeded in defeating Britain and had thus presented the United States with a *fait accompli*, such a victory would not have solved the problem of Germany's future. Peace, should such a victory have resulted, would have meant (to use von Seeckt's own words) 'trenches surrounding the Reich'—if 'peace' could have been spoken of at all in such a connection. Economic war would have continued; Germany would have been compelled to pursue her policy of 'guns instead of butter' and to exploit the continent of Europe for all she was worth until her own economic strength had broken down completely. Germany, in such a plight, would not have been supplied with thousands of millions of American dollars, would not have been able to restore her world commerce, or to have worked productively. Good fortune does not favour this our world, least of all in Europe, unless the continent lives harmoniously with the rest of the earth's inhabitants.

Here we are faced with a thorny problem. Every war was, is, and will be aimed at securing stability. Whatever Germany's aims may have been in the first World War, she fought for them with all her might, with her

U-boats and with her intense desire for a triumphal victory. Nevertheless, in the end she crashed. Just as it befell Napoleon and the feudal, martial, and pan-Germanic upper strata of Imperial Germany to have no alternative other than victorious peace or downfall, so is it now with the German National Socialist dictatorship. Victory or defeat—Napoleon and Ludendorff in their day were constrained by the force of circumstances. Hitler was obliged to fall upon Russia since he failed to cement a strong alliance with the Soviet Union.

Russia has always represented an important key position in every war between a European continental power and the British Empire. It was, therefore, quite natural for National Socialist Germany to conclude a pact with Russia in August 1939 and to endeavour to expand this pact into a genuine alliance. But, as we know, Hitler invaded Russia; the pact was broken. These stages of development are different ways of trying to achieve the one and only aim of defeating England.

Though Napoleon's philosophy of life differed widely from that of the tsar, he had to ally himself with Alexander I. So, too, the gulf between Hitler's and Stalin's outlook had to be bridged in so far as their respective interests allowed.

National Socialist Germany is not waging two different wars with two different war aims, but is waging one single war with one single aim, and that is the conquest of Great Britain. All that happens in eastern Europe is but a part of Germany's gigantic struggle to achieve this goal. The *Völkischer Beobachter* stated the fact unequivocally, soberly, clearly, and succinctly: 'The bitter fighting taking place on the eastern front is not a preamble to a fresh war, but a new phase in the battle against England.' The same issue of this National Socialist newspaper contains an article which says: 'There exists no doubt that the Führer will, in his iron determination, take every imaginable step to achieve victory in the titanic struggle for the honour and future security of the German nation. A new front has arisen in the east while the din of battle elsewhere continues. But we know that this new offensive was essential since no other solution was possible.'

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Germany expected good effects from her pact with Russia. The *Völkischer Beobachter* wrote on June 23rd, 1941, as it had very similarly

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done on September 1st, 1940, that no man of common sense could foster the idea that England and France would take up arms without Russian backing, which was all-important. But events turned out otherwise, and from this fundamental miscalculation others have developed.

On June 23rd, 1941, the *Völkischer Beobachter* voiced the suspicion that Stalin's aim in signing his pact with Germany was to encourage Hitler and his henchmen to hold their own in spite of threats emanating from England and France. If this surmise on the part of a typical National Socialist newspaper be correct, Stalin certainly attained his purpose. The same paper also stated that Stalin, after France's unexpected collapse, had to face the great danger of soon seeing his own country attacked by an equally powerful Germany, a Germany that no other European power could withstand. This interpretation was justified. Litvinov himself declared later that Russia was fully aware of how serious a danger a victory of Hitler's hordes would constitute for her. There is no shadow of doubt that National Socialism wanted all along to acquire lands in eastern Europe. It was, therefore, quite natural that Russia, before signing her pact with Germany, should stipulate for guarantees which would obstruct Germany's aspirations in the East. Germany was thus forced to refrain from exercising any influence on Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Bessarabia. This the Third Reich did because all her plans for the future, including those relative to the East, depended either on victory or defeat of the western powers, especially of Great Britain.

In former days Russia was skilful in utilizing any uncertain situation in Western Europe in favour of her own position. In any case, the Russo-German pact was a rather dubious affair. Russia's activities regarding her foreign policy during the years 1933 to 1940 were dictated by bloody experiences gained in the first World War, by National Socialist aims in the East, and by the ambiguity of Russo-German relations. Churchill said as early as October 1st, 1939: 'Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland instead of as invaders. But that the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace . . . I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest or safety of

Russia that Germany should plant herself upon the shores of the Black Sea, or that she should overrun the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of South-Eastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia . . . Thus, my friends, at some risk of being proved wrong by events, I will proclaim to-night my conviction that the second great fact of the first month of the war is that Hitler, and all that Hitler stands for, have been and are being warned off the east and south-east of Europe.'

There may be some truth in Hitler's words spoken on June 22nd, 1941, in respect of the refusal of his peace offer of October 6th, 1939: 'The reason for this refusal lay in that England still hoped to mobilize a European coalition, including the Balkans and Soviet Russia, against Germany.'

It is quite intelligible that Germany did not appreciate that objective observers pointed to the problematic character of the Russo-German pact, at that time. It was, of course, in the interest of Germany's statesmen and generals to make the Russo-German friendship appear to be unshakable, for it showed what immense risks Germany's enemies had to face. Napoleon, too, was placed in very similar circumstances when he saw himself forced with biting sarcasm to scoff at those visionaries who forecast strained relations between Alexander I and himself. The British Isles were the main objective in those days as they are now. When comparing the events of our time with those of former days there is great similarity not only in the situations but also in the speeches made.

No wonder that Hitler, after having attained his great 'Cannae' in France, emphasized how strong and reliable was the Russo-German friendship. He had it in mind to convince England that her fight was hopeless. In the course of a speech delivered on July 19th, 1940, Hitler threatened England with a dire fate should she reject his 'last appeal' to common sense. He declared once again that relations between Germany and Russia were definitely consolidated, that neither of these two powers had done anything beyond the stipulated terms of this pact, and that any hope England might harbour of easing her condition by creating a European crisis would prove vain so far as relations between Germany and Russia were concerned. He added with a sneer that English statesmen are somewhat slow in perceiving things as they are but that they would learn to understand his words in the course of time.

For all these frothy threats British statesmen remained unmoved, since they were convinced that by their naval power they would acquire new allies as they had invariably done. Churchill declared on August 20th, 1940: 'Many opportunities may lie open to amphibious power, and we must be ready to take advantage of them.' Some days earlier Eden had said that England would fight alone for a short while and would be proud of doing so, but that the forces of liberation would soon rally.



After having lost the air battle over England, Germany had to consider Eastern Europe her most important problem. Though Russia's neutrality proved very useful and until a certain moment also quite sufficient, Germany had under considerably changed circumstances — economic, strategical, and military — either to enlarge her pact with Russia to the full status of an alliance or, as Napoleon did after Erfurt, to force Russia into subordination.

True to the model Napoleon had set up, Germany tried first of all to attain her object by an alliance with Russia. In November 1940 Molotov went to Berlin at the invitation of the German government. There it was suggested to him that the Soviet Union should enter Germany's, Italy's and Japan's three-power pact which had been concluded on September 27th, 1940. This pact resembled the former Anti-Comintern pact in many respects. In April 1941 the Russian newspaper *Pravda* announced that Russia had rejected the offer. This was the first communication regarding the matter, but it did not come as a surprise, for Soviet Russia had emphasized soon after Molotov's visit to Berlin that she would firmly adhere to her policy of neutrality. The note the Third Reich sent to Soviet Russia on June 21st, 1941, announced in unequivocal terms that the respective mediators had not been able to come to terms as to the price which should be paid for this alliance. No allusion was made to the ideological deviations between the two powers. But the interests of these two powers diverged too widely for a Russo-German alliance to be possible and to prove advantageous to Germany's further conduct of war against England. Things might have turned out differently if Russo-German co-operation, provided for by the 'Rapallo Agreement' of April 16th, 1922, during the era of the Weimar republic, had been carried out. In such case the anti-Russian policy of German National Socialism would never have

arisen. As a matter of fact, in the end such an enmity could not be avoided. Thus it became impossible for Germany even to think of vast enlargements of her commerce with Russia. Neither could she depend on Russian help in scotching British interests in the Orient and in Asia. Under prevailing conditions the German commanding officers had to face a problem of increasing significance in respect of the further conduct of war against Britain. The *Völkischer Beobachter* of June 23rd, 1941, discussed this problem in the following terms: 'So long as a Bolshevik army of millions of men, fully armed and biding their time, was in fighting trim along the entire border from Lithuania to Bessarabia, the German generals were permanently uncertain about coming events; this factor was enough to render the German army's operations against the British Empire very difficult or even impossible if they were to be carried out for a lengthy period.'



The future only will disclose whether National Socialist diplomacy had decided from the outset either to cajole Russia into an alliance with Germany without committing herself too deeply or to cut the Gordian knot. Germany's activities in the Balkans, the transport of German troops into Finland, the conclusion of the three-power pact, and particularly the dispatch of German air forces and a German military mission to Rumania in October 1940—these and many other things which took place before Molotov's visit to Berlin spoke in favour of the more drastic alternative. The second alternative seemed the more likely, since renewed negotiations with a strongly armed Russia would have become increasingly difficult in the course of the war against Britain.

The meeting of Molotov and Hitler in Berlin was a turning-point in the relations between Russia and Germany, just as was the conference of Tsar Alexander and Napoleon at Erfurt in respect of the relations between Russia and France more than a century ago. Germany made the best of a bad bargain after November 12th, 1940, precisely as Napoleon had to do after Erfurt.

It was not by mere chance that the Third Reich began soon after this meeting to do all in its power to win the Balkans over to its side. On November 21st, 1940, Hungary entered the three-power pact, and Rumania did so on the 22nd. Two days later Slovakia followed suit. On December 4th Rumanian economy passed under the control of Germany. The

attempted *coup d'état* of Rumanian legionaries and communists against Antonescu's pro-German government in January 1941 was not only acclaimed but also supported by Russia.

It was not necessarily out of fear of an acute crisis in the supply of food, raw materials, and petrol, or of a Russian stab in the back, that Germany concentrated her attention mainly on the east of Europe at this time. It was rather in pursuance of the idea that the sooner the rich resources of the east were at the disposal of the German war machine the better.

As already pointed out, Imperial Germany had, after failing to achieve a decision in western Europe, thought of transferring the centre of gravity in the conduct of the war to the eastern front. After the first World War, General Gröner especially emphasized in his book *World War and its Problems* that this strategy would have been the only way which promised success and it should have been carried out immediately after the failure of the Schlieffen plan. Gröner, who died in the spring of 1939, was a wholehearted adherent of Schlieffen's strategy and believed firmly in this strategy because it promised the most effective solution of Germany's economic problems. But the Schlieffen plan had not succeeded, and an economic war was now to be faced. Military operations had, therefore, to accommodate themselves to the vital economic requirements of the German nation. In this connection Gröner argued that when the military break-through to the west had failed in 1914, and when there was no prospect of an economic break-through in that direction either, Germany was reduced to aiming at an economic break-through to the east. Acquiring land and altering the map in the east was not the object. What mattered to Germany was reopening the ways of communication to the east and renewing her connection with institutions and forms of economic life in Asiatic Russia. To put the matter in a nutshell, a Eurasian economic policy should have been adopted so as to tilt the scales to a certain extent and thus compensate Germany for her economic losses in the markets of the United States of America. The preliminary condition for bringing such a policy into effect was to defeat the Russian army so completely that Russia would realize to the full how hopeless any further resistance would be. Thus it was hoped that Russia would be disposed to make peace. The military task would be difficult but by no means impossible if only the Russian army could be prevented from retreating into the vast expanses of Russian territory.

## NEW WORLD WAR—OLD PROBLEMS

General Gröner regretted very much that Germany during the first World War took only spasmodic action against the east instead of an all-out attack. Gröner's supposition is not corroborated by the facts of the case, nor did he mean to imply that a 'full-scale attack' on Russia would necessarily lead to a 'break-through to world economy'. Fundamentally he meant that Germany should apply the same principle as the National Socialists have endeavoured to carry out during the present conflict; namely, to prepare the way by getting the Balkans under their control.



Historical events are highly instructive for future action. Every government is endeavouring to learn from history. Since Napoleon's war against England was unparalleled in world history, the Corsican was not in a position to glean anything of use for his plans from world history. Imperial Germany had an historical model in Napoleon with regard to her war against England and could have learned her lesson from history. National Socialist Germany had two historical examples she could have consulted as regards her war against Great Britain, for she was in the position not only to study various historical books but also to take advice from living persons who fought during the first World War and played a leading part in it. Churchill, who never underestimated his enemy's abilities, took it for granted that Germany would have learned her lesson from the first World War and would attempt her economic break-through to the east earlier this time than she did before. He hinted therefore to Stalin to be on his guard with Hitler.

In this connection an article, entitled 'Economic War and Operational Conduct of War: an Historical Contribution' (published in the *Military Scientific Review*, the paper of the German General Staff, No. 1, March 1941), is of great interest, since this treatise deals with the problem of an economic break-through to the east. The author reviews historical occurrences relative to this theme, such as Napoleon's economic war, America's War of Secession, and the first World War. He refers to Helfferich's and von der Goltz' ideas and cites many passages from Churchill's works, published after the 1914-18 war. He also stresses the overwhelming significance of economy as well as of blockade, and argues that economic strife during the first World War greatly influenced the whole condition of Germany and her allies, and effected their ultimate defeat because the

Central Powers failed in breaking through the ring around them in good time and at a decisive point. Churchill thought in this connection that the Central Powers, being incapable of breaking the blockade by sea, had to try to break it by land. Though the sea was closed to them Asia lay open, and they could have developed into a self-supporting and self-sufficient organism by expanding their borders over vast territories. Only by succeeding in building up such an independent organism could they have wrenched from their enemy's hands the most positive and the deadliest of weapons.

The article in question, though the author has some pleasant words to say regarding the Russo-German pact amidst his tremendous roll of drums about the importance of an economic break-through in the east, roused alarm in Russia. Russia's reaction was to get ready for every eventuality. At any rate, the storm clouds were gathering in eastern Europe. Events of great consequence increasingly darkened the eastern horizon. Germany had succeeded in bringing Bulgaria into her three-power pact, and Russia did not omit frankly to express her indignation. Early in April 1941 Yugoslavia also entered the three-power pact to the accompaniment of German shouts of jubilation. Two days later, on April 5th, the Yugoslavian government, which had coerced the country into entering the three-power pact, was overthrown by a *coup d'état*, and Russia concluded with the new Yugoslavian government an agreement of friendship. This event, sensational as it was, was next day followed by the invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece. Invasion of these two countries was not the traditional struggle for spheres of interest and influence, nor was it a combat for 'living space' or a fight for making German and Italian war economy secure. It was all these things with, in addition, preliminary measures for seizing suitable territory from which to march on Russia.

Russia had kept a vigilant eye on these developments in the Balkans while distrustfully noting the trend of relations between Germany and certain Finnish circles. Moscow remembered only too well that Ludendorff had sent a German army to Finland on March 3rd, 1918, intending thus to encircle Petersburg from a line between Narva and Viborg. The geographic situation of Leningrad, as Petersburg was later named by the Bolsheviks, has never been a favourable one in regard to Russian warfare on her western border. Recalling these facts, Soviet Russia made it her business to improve her strategic position by signing the pact with Hitler's Germany.

All who were acquainted with National Socialist economic policy and political ambition knew that the Russo-German pact did not imply abandoning National Socialist plans for the future in eastern Europe. In an earlier work I wrote: 'There is no objective necessity and Germany's existence is not at stake, yet it seems very doubtful whether National Socialist policy or its representatives will ever abandon the primary plans of expansion to the east. Since Hitler's Germany renounces world economy, aims at autarchy, ruins the basis for rational international commerce by her autarchic experiments, and has a great increase of her population, she must also be careful as to how she answers the vital question as to the way in which she contemplates adequately to support so many additional people.' (*Tyskland och Sovietunionen*, Stockholm, July 1940, p. 120.)



The impetus of this problem reached its climax with tremendous speed during the protracted war. British sea power converted Germany's National Socialist idol of autarchy into an uncomfortable and enforced autarchy; British naval forces turned the National Socialist partial self-blockade to a total blockade. Germany had it in mind to free herself from world economy in pre-war days but she has been compelled to manage without world economy during the present conflict. National Socialist Germany intended to expand to the east for autarchic purposes; now she has been compelled to try to achieve this expansion at extraordinary risks. Sooner or later National Socialist Germany would have attempted to expand her borders eastward because of her economic and political tenets. But during the campaign she has had to do so in double quick time and while she was still waging war against England. Her invasion of Russia was precipitated by the stranglehold of the British blockade which left her with no other choice. It would seem that the German initial plan was to defeat Britain first, and then to gain 'living space' in the east. But the relentless law of war did not permit of any such smooth carrying out of Germany's schemes.

Any man possessing an iota of common sense should have known in advance how very dubious the conquest in eastern Europe would be for Germany if undertaken under the iron compulsion of the British blockade. It was mainly for this reason that the German agrarians living east of the Elbe made it part of their programme to come to a friendly agreement

with Great Britain after the first World War. It is also known that Hitler, only two days after signing the Russo-German pact, took fresh steps towards reaching an agreement with England, offering her the greatest possible advantages. That the Chancellor of the Third Reich did so obviously proves that he still hoped to achieve his final aim of foreign policy regarding eastern Europe. Whether Hitler still thought it feasible to realize his chief idea in respect of eastern Europe in May 1941 is doubtful. But his deputy, Rudolf Hess, apparently deemed it possible. His 'mission' to the British Isles is a proof of it.

Whether there was any connection between Germany's battle for the Greek island of Crete and Rudolf Hess' failure to bring England over to Germany's side or not, many people were of opinion that the invasion of Crete was the dress rehearsal for the invasion of Britain. Others considered the German occupation of Crete a prelude to the decisive battle for the Mediterranean and Egypt. Strangely enough neither the Germans nor the Italians showed much interest in the fact that British forces with de Gaulle's soldiers were marching into Syria. Judging in retrospect, the conquest of Crete with all its consequences seems to have been a preliminary to the attack on Russia. Full control over Crete gave the Axis powers, which lacked a strong navy and had therefore mainly to rely on their air forces, a chance to cut off the British fleet from the Aegean Sea and consequently from the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, as well as to sever Russia's sea communications with Great Britain in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, both the Balkans and the precious Rumanian oilfields would be secured for the Axis.

It is certain that the Turco-German agreement of friendship would not have been signed at a time immediately preceding Germany's invasion of Russia had not Turkey found herself in a tight corner through Germany's action in the Balkans and in the Aegean Sea.

It is an interesting and noteworthy historical fact that Germany could gain control over large tracts of the sea merely by the effective use of her air fleet with Italian co-operation. Equally noteworthy is the fact that Germany's continental forces were pushed into the vast spaces of Russia mainly by the increasing weight of the allied air forces and not by effects produced by their naval actions.

The heart of Germany's industry beats in western Germany. Here are Germany's most productive coal mines. Since the coal seams are concen-

trated in this area, the removal of great plants from the Ruhr to other places is restricted. What could be done in this respect was carried out under the heavy weight of British air raids over this industrially most precious district of Germany. From the standpoint of air strategy, the highly industrialized and densely populated western part of Germany is the Achilles heel of the Reich. The heavier the air raids on Germany's plants the greater the difficulties in respect of Germany's industrial production. In the last resort this is a problem which Germany can never solve.

Most probably Germany had taken this into the reckoning when she decided to carry the war to her eastern frontiers after the failure of her air attacks on England in 1940-41. The battle having failed, Germany had to turn her attention to the east. Among other reasons she was influenced by the fact that only thus would she have the opportunity of removing important war industries from the west of the Reich to safer places in the east in case of really formidable air attacks by the Allies. Germany had good reasons for making her war industry secure in the best manner possible, since she had, in contrast with the Allies, no safe lands beyond the seas where she could produce her weapons undisturbed. The only way out of the manifold difficulties with which she was beset lay in eastern Europe. In eastern Europe alone could Germany find safe shelter for her war industries. There she would get precious raw materials and food and, above all, petrol which she urgently needed for waging the war. Paradoxical as it may seem, modern warfare can only be carried on if opportunities are provided for continuing it. If economic conditions are such as to make urgent a continuance of military actions, war has to be persisted in. Blockaded Germany found herself in precisely such a precarious economic condition in her fight against the Anglo-Saxon combination and its prodigious industrial production and naval power.

General Werner von Blomberg, who was War Minister of the Third Reich for many years, said in 1935: 'Europe is too small for war.' This saying applies with peculiar aptness to war with the British Empire. Should any continental power attempt to impose its will on the British Commonwealth it ought thoroughly to take into consideration the British dominions and colonies and Asia before engaging on so immense a task. Britain does not need to expand, either in peace or in war. What she has to bear in mind in the case of war is how to drive her enemy out of the

seas and how to safeguard her own shores. An aggressive continent power is inevitably forced to expand its war for economic and strategic reasons.

An article, 'The Greatest Task', by Karl Haushofer (*Journal of Geopolitics*, July 1941) reports that Germany was endeavouring in a friendly fashion to rope Eurasia into the 'protective' union of the Berlin-Rome-Tokio triangle; this endeavour dated back to the summer of 1939. But the efforts which aimed at the creation of a united and therefore invincible Eurasia were frustrated by Soviet Russia's attitude. From this we learn that Germany considered it vital to get Eurasia to play a positive part in the war of the Central European powers against the 'oceanic' powers. Since German diplomacy failed in attaining this end, the German army had to draw the long bow.

Germany by no means gained what she had hoped and urgently needed from the Russo-German pact of August 23rd, 1939, and from the subsequent economic agreement of February 11th, 1940. There is nothing to be surprised at in this when we take into account the illusive nature of Russo-German relations together with the extremely low level of trade between Germany and Russia at the time the pact was signed. Germany's imports from Russia amounted to only 5.8 per cent of Germany's total imports in 1932 and had decreased to 0.9 per cent in 1938. Germany imported goods worth three hundred and three million marks from Russia and exported goods worth seven hundred and sixty-two million marks to Russia in 1931, whereas her imports from Russia amounted to eleven million marks and her exports to the Soviet Union merely to sixteen million marks in the period from January to June 1939. To all appearances, at the outset Nationalist Socialist Germany had not adjusted herself to the economic alliance with Russia but had, on the contrary, regarded Russia as her principal enemy and England as her desirable ally or at least as a more or less benevolent onlooker.

In accordance with this conception the Anglo-German naval agreement of June 18th, 1935, was considered a clever move of the German foreign office. Germany knew very well that England could easily block the North Sea and thus create great difficulties for the Reich. So, the Anglo-German naval agreement was generally welcomed as a desirable pacification in relations between Germany and Great Britain. Moreover, it seemed obvious that Germany's military economy would be eased by

an agreement which mitigated England's antagonism. No doubt the National Socialist regime looked upon this move as safeguarding Germany's rear in respect of a British attack. But this supposed safeguard vanished completely after Munich. In short, Germany had only a relatively small navy at her disposal, and the 'backing' she expected from Russia was both politically and economically a highly dubious business. She was, therefore, in bad straits with an impending naval and economic war to encounter. Had the National Socialists foreseen precisely whither their 'dynamic' was to push them, Russo-German relations and, above all, Russo-German trade, would have been placed on a much more rational footing long in advance and not only at a time when war with the western powers was imminent. As for the German fleet, even with correct foresight, this could not have been considerably enlarged. In the course of a protracted war, Germany was obliged to improvise many a measure in the conduct of hostilities and in changing circumstances. This has been no easy task for the National Socialist government.

The retired German Secretary of State Baron von Rheinbaben said: 'Fundamental facts cannot be made away with by propaganda.' I myself once wrote: 'Germany will be confronted with great difficulties in bringing her trade with Russia to the relatively high level which existed in 1932. Even if this could be achieved, the question as to how payment could be arranged was left undecided. In former days Germany had mainly paid for goods imported from Russia by supplying machinery to Russia. For the moment Soviet Russia agreed to this mode of payment though so far as Germany was concerned it was likely to prove a heavy burden for the Reich, since it was already involved in war. In peace-time it was of great help in spite of the fact that in pre-war days Germany suffered a scarcity of highly qualified workmen, technicians, and raw materials. The country was, therefore, hard put to it to renew its machinery and keep it up to date. Should Russia refuse to allow credit to Germany, the latter would not be in a position to get from Russia even that relatively trifling contribution which the Soviet Union was able to spare.' (*Tyskland och Sovietunionen*, p. 118.)

Russia could not become a blockade-runner for Germany and Italy because she herself required ever more petrol and other raw materials important to the waging of war. Further, she was beset with traffic difficulties and likewise found it hard to make both ends meet. In all proba-

## THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

bility a better general organization might have improved the whole situation, and the Germans, who are such good organizers, would willingly have lent a hand to Russia. But Russia feared Germany too much to allow herself to become so deeply involved with her latent antagonist. Though Axis propaganda was making much ado about the effectiveness of the Russo-German pact, in reality it could not be compared in importance with the Anglo-American co-operation either politically or economically. And there was an essential difference between the Russo-German pact on the one hand and Anglo-American collaboration on the other hand, for the United States of America were all along deeply concerned in Britain's victory, whereas Russia had always to fear a victorious Germany.

By the stipulations of her treaty with Germany in April 1941 Russia had to deliver one million tons of petrol to Germany. Though this is not a very imposing quantity, German propaganda made the best of it. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether Germany ever got this quantity of petrol from Russia. According to American information, Germany got 0.8 million tons of petrol from Russia in 1940.

Semi-official German information, published some time after the outbreak of war between Germany and Russia, made it known that Russia had been slowing down her supply to Germany since early in 1941 because Germany was in arrears with her contribution. Russia asked for speedier deliveries, which Germany could not provide because she had in the first place to deliver machinery which required high working capacity. The first World War was costlier to Germany so far as machinery and the war in the west were concerned than World War No. II was proving to be. The protracted and stabilized warfare of 1914-18 used up immense quantities of war material and machinery. But Germany needed much more highly qualified workmanship in the second World War, and this even before the invasion of Russia. Apart from insufficiency of raw materials and from traffic difficulties, Germany was not able to ease her war-time economical situation by keeping up her foreign trade, even the scant foreign trade and commerce which remained available to her. Nevertheless German supplies to Russia might have been intensified in spite of existing obstacles. But Germany had as little interest in strengthening Russia's war potential (at least after Molotov's disappointing visit to Berlin) as Russia had in the opposite direction. Such

being the state of affairs, Germany's road to India was blocked. All this was far too complicated for the simple soldier to understand. During the course of events in the spring of 1941 Russia strictly prohibited the transit of arms through Soviet territory. This occurred at the end of April. A few days later Rashid Ali staged an anti-British riot in Iraq. The press abroad took the Russian prohibition as a sign of her fear of Germany.

From that time a rumour was about that Germany had made very far-reaching claims upon Russia. There was much talk of 'leasing the Ukraine and the Caucasian oilfields', about demanding the 'demobilization of the Russian army on the western front', about 'leasing Russia's Baltic ports to Germany', about 'establishing German industry on Russian territory', particularly at places of air-strategical value to Germany's aims, and so forth and so on. Though Moscow denied all this hearsay, similar rumours emerged again and again. The Berlin correspondent of *Dagens Nyheter* observed at that time that Germans counted upon a lengthy war and that the Ukraine must henceforth become the focus of German interest. The same reports came from this newspaper's correspondent in Rome early in June 1941. This correspondent remarked that there were two interpretations of these rumours: one meant the capitulation of Russia, and the other war with Russia.

The predominating opinion in the press of the world was that Russia would capitulate. There were also rumours about acute antagonisms within the circle of the Russian executive power itself, just as there was in Tsar Paul's and Tsar Alexander's days. Occupation of the Ukraine was obviously vital to Germany. On the other hand, if Russia had ceded the Ukraine she would have ceased to be a great power in Europe — at least for the time being. Thus war seemed to be inevitable. In his proclamation to the peoples of the Soviet Union immediately after Germany's invasion of Russia, Molotov declared that Germany had never claimed anything from the Soviet government. If this be true, then the only conclusion to be drawn is that the German government did not dream of negotiations with Russia for the obvious reason that no good result was to be expected since no Russian government would or could make such far-reaching concessions to Germany as she had asked for and was forced to ask for with a view to her requirements in her war against Britain. Taking everything into consideration, negotiations with Russia would

have been disadvantageous to Germany in her surprise assault and would have upset her strategic plan.

'War obeys its own commandments' were the introductory words of an article entitled 'War with Russia' which appeared in the *Völkischer Beobachter* on June 23rd, 1941. These words are significant, serious, and weighty. They are characteristic of what any continental power had to expect if it aimed at a defeat of Britain. In this connection the following extract from the same article is even more expressive: 'The imposing German military forces which are overthrowing every English satellite one by one must be put to new and increasingly important tasks.'



Speaking about the war against Russia, Hitler said on October 3rd, 1941: 'It was, I dare disclose this to-day, the gravest decision I had been forced to take in the whole course of my life. Every such step opens a door behind which secrets are in hiding, and only future generations will know exactly how and why it came about and what happened.' Strange words indeed, but the course the war had taken in eastern Europe showed, in its surprising ups and downs, how every war has to dictate its own particular rules which result from vital political decisions. Napoleon once observed very frankly and pregnantly that he himself could never decide on his moves and was never allowed to follow his own wishes.

History proves the truth of Napoleon's utterance — especially in the case of Russia. The rules of war imposed the decision on him also to march against Russia when his attempt on England failed and that march spelled Napoleon's doom. Windelband called the sequence of Napoleon's martial enterprises his 'vicious circle'. The same applies to the path National Socialists have taken in our own times.

In the Napoleonic epoch, just as now, a great naval power stood temporarily by itself, but ere long acquired mighty allies. It is of the essence of a great naval power persistently to evoke various problems and a broadening scale of action upon a continental power which is waging war against it. Sooner or later these influences come uppermost. No continental power, be it ever so mighty, can occasion such powerful influences.

Thrice, including Napoleon's attempt, has a European continental power marched out against England in order to conquer her. Three times in succession has a bloody drama been performed on the stage of the

world's history because of bitter fighting between Britain and her adversary, and this irrespective of changes in the executive authority, ideology, and phraseology. These dramas, the author of which is world history, contain intrinsically logical and deep historical significance. When bitter facts utter unmistakable, plain, and convincing words, there is no room left for such phrases as 'Hitler's great blunder' or 'anti-bolshevik crusade'.

Jointly and unitedly Britain and Russia are waging war against a common enemy. They have bound themselves together not only to give mutual help but also to refuse any separate peace. Though history has taught us that similar agreements are not always kept, yet in this case they most indubitably will be kept, for it is unimaginable that Russia after making such monstrous sacrifices of life and prosperity should conclude a pact of friendship with Germany. The whole eastern situation reminds us of that which existed in 1812 when Napoleon failed in his efforts to make peace with Russia.

Napoleon with his numerically superior forces and his mass-armies could indulge in a war of annihilation, conquering and occupying whole countries. Nevertheless, strategic rules operating on the shores of the English Channel and in the wider spaces of the east eventually thwarted him. It was an impossible task to conquer and occupy the vast spaces of Russia, even for a particularly gifted man like Napoleon. Only if he had achieved a decisive victory over Russia and succeeded in forcing Tsar Alexander into capitulation could the great political aim of his Russian campaign have been attained in 1812. The hopelessness of once more attaining a 'Peace of Tilsit', far more than the difficult military situation in which he found himself, induced Napoleon to give up the idea of a further advance into Russia and to decide on retreat. When Napoleon, without declaring war on Russia, crossed the river Niemen in June 1812, he had scarcely given a thought to so catastrophic an end to his Russian campaign.

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We do not yet know exactly the scope of the aspirations and expectations which National Socialist Germany fostered when, without declaring war on the Soviet Union, she crossed the Russian boundary in June 1941. But we must assume that she did not indulge in the illusion of conquering,

governing, and exploiting the almost limitless territories of Russia by military measures alone. It is most probable that Germany planned to encircle and destroy Russia's main forces, thus following von Gröner's solution. By such means she hoped to prevent them from retreating into inner Russia, and to smash the basis of the existing Russian regime until military defeat and internal unrest would bring about a separate peace and the building up of a new regime which would agree to supply her needs. Such a combination of military and political strategy would have been quite within the orbit of National Socialist ideas. Indeed it had become the custom of the Third Reich to act in this way.

Optimism was rife at that time in Germany. The National Socialist paper *Völkischer Beobachter* published on August 3rd, 1941, a leader with the caption 'The Dangerous Enemy'. In this article the author declared that when Germany's military forces set out to march against Bolshevism on June 22nd, many Germans thought that the Bolshevik regime would, like a colossus with feet of clay, collapse at the first heavy blows from the German sword. At the same time it was emphasized that Germany's responsible political and military leaders were not so optimistic in this respect.

Contrary to her experience in 1914-18 Germany found her strongest foe not to be France but Russia. Germany's very quick victory in the west and Russia's very tough resistance in the east were the two biggest surprises of the second World War.

There can be no doubt that Russia's immense power of resistance has its roots firstly and mostly in her prodigious industrialization since the revolution. Certainly, Russia's large population is an important military factor, but without appropriate economic and industrial strength, that is to say without the necessary tanks, planes, and all the other modern arms, which she was surprisingly able to produce and with the material aid from the U.S.A. and Britain which sea power enabled them to bring to her, the Russian colossus would have been helpless in face of the advancing German crack troops.

Just before the October revolution Lenin wrote: 'War is pitiless. War puts its question in an inexorably severe manner. Either we shall have to face the complete defeat of the revolution or we shall have to catch up and surpass highly developed countries in the economic field.' These became the Soviet watchwords as soon as the Bolsheviks had gained authority

after the monstrous peace of Brest-Litovsk. *Pravda* wrote on February 8th, 1928: 'We agree with Voroshilov, that the production of first-rate technical modern arms for the Red Army is the foremost task of our five years economic plan.'

Long before the first World War Churchill and many persons, among them Rosa Luxemburg, predicted that Russia, as soon as she had shaken off the chains of her past, would make up for all her neglects and with giant strides would outstrip many other powers. It was Bolshevism which carried out this prophecy.

Gigantic Russia, which scarcely knew paraffin oil for lighting not so long ago, became more and more electrified; railways and roads were built in rapidly increasing measure; engineers and motorized machinery dominated the cultivation of Russia's fertile plains in the most modern fashion. The number of threshing machines rose from 25,000 in 1933 to 153,000 in 1938; the number of tractors in use increased from 210,000 in 1933 to 483,000 in 1938; the number of motor lorries for farming work rose from 26,000 to 195,000 during the same period. According to Russian statistics, industrial production between 1929 and 1938 rose by roughly 400 per cent. This figure in comparison with that of 1913 showed an increase of 900 per cent.

Marshal Budjenny declared, quite rightly, at the meeting of the Russian Communist Party in March 1939: 'From the military point of view, high quality steel means increased artillery, tanks, planes. It is due to high quality steel that planes can fly with greater speed and at a greater height. The Red Army has gained immense advantages from Russia's systematic industrialization.'

The rebuilding of Russia's economy was behind schedule at times from one cause or the other. Also the Soviet Union had to face some embarrassing situations in regard to industry and traffic and this not only during the first stages of the Soviet regime. G. M. Malenkov, for example, complained at the meeting of the Russian Communist Party in February 1941 of red-tapism in Russian economy and of neglect in utilizing industrial products, mentioning among other things that seventy serviceable turning lathes were once found at a plant under snow and rubble. Though, beyond doubt, inconveniences arose in respect of industrial rationalization and systematization, spectacular advances were made in every field of industry since tsarism disappeared. The *Berliner Börsenzeitung* wrote on

August 18th, 1937: 'The Russians use only the very best material, the best educated and qualified workmen and outstanding industrial technicians for everything which is concerned with economic mobilization.' And in truth Soviet Russia worked well. The foundations upon which the Red Army's economy is built far outstrip Russia's general economy. The Red Army enjoys most advantageous conditions as a result of the armament industry which has worked far better than those industries which produce for civil requirements.

Taking the good with the bad, the Soviet Union's organization of her industry is admirable and is a highly important factor in Russia's military power.

Wherever large-scale industrialization takes place, the condition of the people as a whole improves. This development applies in particular to the quality of a nation's soldiery, so that the standard of the entire army is advanced. In this connection it may be mentioned that the number of workmen and employees in Russia doubled during the period from 1928 to 1937, and amounted to thirty millions in 1940. Nevertheless Russia is still predominantly an agrarian country, but the standard of life among the peasantry is rising, owing to collective farming, the mechanization of agriculture, and the enormous impetus which has been given to school life and educational opportunities. The Russian peasant is no longer the illiterate man he was in 1914. The events of the first World War, the revolution, and the civil war which followed have greatly influenced the Russian people. The fact that the Russian peasants succeeded in driving out their former masters and took possession of their lands is of incalculable psychological significance. Moreover the victory of Russian workmen and peasants over the interventionists and counter-revolutionaries resulted in an accretion of self-confidence. Russian nationalism has risen as did French nationalism in the days of the Great Revolution. And Russia's industrialization has served not only as a lever on cultural life in general but has raised the Russian consciousness as a nation to a high pitch.



The unexpected display of potent and imposing resistance as well as the martial spirit of the Red Army goes to prove that Bolshevik patriotism is by no means a mere phrase, but is an impressive reality. This marvellous

Russian patriotism became particularly apparent when the Russian armies had at first to accomplish the hard business of retreating and retreating without damping down their fighting spirit and losing their confidence. The Red Army stood up to the ordeal with admirable fortitude. The German armies of the dictator state had not had to face any such ordeal but we may be sure that they would have maintained their morale if the French had broken into the Rhineland in the first days of the second World War, thus launching a surprise attack upon the Nazis. Though the form of government on which the people's rights and liberties is based is of the utmost importance, critical moments will arise in a nation's life when even those who are strongly opposed to the existing regime and its policies think it best to silence their opposition in the interest of the nation's future welfare — especially during a short war or at the beginning of a long one. This was the case during the war of unification in Germany. Those who wish to overthrow the existing dictatorship bide their time in the full consciousness of the responsibility they owe their own nation. Thus they deem it best, in the interest of the nation, to co-operate with the regime whose actions and measures they otherwise disapprove. Even the strongest opponents of dictatorship feel obliged, if their country has to wage offensive war on the gigantic scale, to help to the best of their ability because, should they fail to do so, defeat with its evil consequences might overwhelm their own nation.

These reflections do not apply to the Soviet Union. For Russia it was a defensive war. Moreover, the ignominy of the peace of Brest-Litovsk and the occupation of the Ukraine were fresh in the Russian people's memory. Many a Russian alive to-day had to live through those fearful years when, not having the strength to carry on the war and not even wishing to do so, they had to see their country torn asunder and devastated. After 1933, the Russian government had positive proof as to the fate in store for their country should Germany conquer. The Russian émigrés detest Stalin and his policy. Yet even the extremist White Guardsmen took a firm line in favour of Soviet Russia's defensive war against the German National Socialists. All Russians, irrespective of their individual shades of opinion, were convinced that the Nazis did not aim merely at annihilating Bolshevism, but at the domination and exploitation of Russia herself.

Nevertheless it must be assumed that there are Russians who have it in

mind to overthrow the existing regime and who deem that such action would be advantageous to Russia. But the nationals of a modern totalitarian state face great, if not insurmountable, difficulties in rallying together for effective opposition. Lack of political freedom, of free mental activities, of a free press, of trade unions and other freely formed associations on the one hand, and an all-powerful dictatorial organization on the other hand, are the most obvious obstacles to the creation of a compact opposition. It has been thought by some that the creation of an opposition party might be more readily procured in Russia than in Nazi Germany, because, let us say, certain sociological and geographical factors might render very difficult or even impossible a strict governmental control over the attitude of people in some area or other of so vast a territory as Russia. But we have seen, though there were excellent opportunities for oppositional uprising, especially in the first phases of the Russo-German war when the Soviet armies were compelled to retreat again and again and when consequently disorganization took place in a number of Russian provinces, nothing in the least like an uprising came to pass. The basis for such loyalty on the part of Russian citizens to their regime is to be found in their boundless patriotism on the one hand, and in their fear of a return to feudal conditions on the other. There may also be other reasons for this unswerving loyalty, but—to all appearances—material and technical reasons do not play a prominent part. It may even be that many a Russian accepts the Bolshevik regime because of fear lest there be a return to the feudal system. Such a fear is far greater than any other Russian anxiety just as it was in France during Napoleonic days. This interpretation is the more likely to be accurate since Stalin's proclamation on July 3rd, 1941, in which he warned his compatriots that the enemy's intention was to restore large estates and tsarism and to Germanize the Russian peoples. On November 6th, 1941, Stalin said that the Hitler regime is nothing other than an imitation of the reactionary zarist system'. Stalin seemed to have attached great value to these arguments—and he had good reason for doing so. The spirit of the Russian October revolution is still very much alive.

The rallying words of Soviet Russia's leading personalities are both national and patriotic—not world-revolutionary. The reasons for this are obvious. They are partly due to the present world situation in the realm of politics. To lay stress on world-wide revolution would be unsuitable

and inexpedient. Also deference has to be paid to the sensitiveness of those Russians who are neither Bolsheviks nor Stalinists in their heart of hearts nor world-revolutionists, and who accept the Soviet regime on the practical grounds of national as well as social well-being. The contemporary attitude of the Soviet regime towards home and foreign policy shows that Bolshevism has had to accommodate itself to world-wide political realities, and has not been able rigidly to cling to its original ideology. In prevailing circumstances Russia has much to be grateful for in the support she has been given by the capitalist great powers of Great Britain and the United States of America, upon which the future fate of all the states depends.

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Should the British Empire and the United States have failed in this war, Russia would have been disrupted and plundered. On the other hand, if Russia had been broken, though it would have had grave repercussions on Britain and the United States, such a defeat would not seal their fate. We have to remember that the western powers won the first World War after Russia's withdrawal and collapse and it was entirely through their victory that the conquered and occupied provinces of Russia became free again. If the Bolsheviks of that day expected Russia's salvation by world revolution, it proved a miscalculation. With good reason the Bolsheviks of our era have taken time by the forelock and rely on the more real factors of world policy.

The entire history of the Soviet Union has developed along a line of gradual adaptation to world political realities. It is not a voluntary adaptation but one imposed by world politics. Nor has it been spectacular, since Soviet Russia imperturbably continues to adhere to Bolshevik phraseology. The policy adopted by Soviet Russia at Rapallo was already a proof that Moscow no longer thought in terms of world revolution, since the propagation of this idea had conspicuously failed. The Soviet Union tried therefore, as far as possible with Germany's aid, to maintain and to build up the strength of Soviet Russia. Co-operation between the Soviet Union and certain German circles was at that time fairly intimate. But National Socialism dragged Germany into a deepening enmity towards her eastern neighbour, on account of its plans of conquest in eastern Europe. This enmity led in the end to the Russo-German war. The conflict could not be prevented in the long run, but, as we know, it was

delayed for a little while by German diplomatic actions dictated by her fear of a war on two fronts. By an irony of fate the Red Army became familiar with von Seeckt's military principles and put them to practical use — greatly to Germany's disadvantage. In this respect the Russians proved to be more modern Europeans than the French who had far better preliminary conditions for the utilization of von Seeckt's military principles had they wished.

Both Germany and the Soviet Union enjoyed the advantage of having to build their armies from the foundation upward and did not have to rely in the higher commands on men grown hoary in old traditions, but on men of high impulsive power. Experience gained during the civil war and especially by the victorious campaigns of Red partisans helped in the creation of an effective modern military machine. Only a few leaders among the Red partisans had been officers in the old tsarist army. Most of the partisans were keen communists and revolutionaries in tsarist days. Budjenny, a marshal of the Red Army and a well-known leader of Russian partisans who created the formation of Red Cossacks, was a non-commissioned officer in the tsar's army. The same can be said of Marshal Voroshilov. Marshal Timoshenko was a factory hand in tsarist Russia. Such sudden promotions did not take place either in the National Socialist or in the Fascist revolutions. We have to go back to the Great French revolution to find anything similar.



Guerrilla warfare has always played an important part in the course of great wars. It is playing the same sort of part nowadays. In the series of military publications among which there was also de Gaulle's book, a monograph on *Guerrilla Warfare* by Arthur Erhardt was published in 1935. The author begins with a description of the acts of guerrillas in Spain and ends with those of Red partisans in Russia. In his prefatory remarks, the author tells us that 'guerrilla warfare often proved the ultimate means of defence among a poorly armed people whose existence was at stake'. Though their adversaries were vastly superior in equipment, the Bolsheviks won the civil war by means of guerrillas whose activities were aided by the geographical situation of the country. Erhardt goes on: 'These previous occurrences should serve as a warning as to the terrifying experiences which may be expected. In numerous battles during

the World War 1914-18, the massive weight of weapons, the barriers of steel along wide fronts, military staffs and bases simply crumbled to pieces, melted away, under the ardour of these revolutionizing methods of warfare. Generals of high standing together with vigorous young officers found themselves helpless in face of the new tactics evolved by the guerrillas whose efficiency had not even been surmised by the best-trained experts. Perhaps some decades ahead while reviewing such systematic and intensive guerrilla warfare it may come to be judged as a significant forerunner of a new fighting tactic, tactics no less important than those which mechanized troops and barbed wire carried out during the Manchurian campaign of 1904-05, or than the utilization of tank armies for reviving mobile warfare in the summer of 1918.

'For these and other reasons it is to be regretted that relatively little is known in western Europe about the experiences and results of the guerrilla warfare carried on by Red partisans. Even the generals of the White Guards who themselves witnessed all that happened in guerrilla warfare do not reveal any essential facts about it. Their autobiographies are written in the traditional manner. They tell us of operational movements, battles, and the shifting of fronts. It is open to question whether these generals ever realized that their outmoded methods of war had been broken by strokes or, rather, by the stabs and arrows of new weapons. Strangely enough the great military powers do not seem to have given sufficient attention to the importance of the guerrilla form of war which decided the fate of the immense Russian state.'

The same author lays stress also on the fact that traditions of the Russian civil war were handed down to the Red Army and to Russian youth which were strongly influenced by them, and prophesies that 'guerrilla warfare as a means of strategy will stand on a par with the operations of the regular army in the next Russian war'. It may be doubted whether partisans will be able effectively to operate abroad, but there is no doubt that an enemy invasion of the vastnesses of Russia will meet with the toughest resistance of Soviet guerrillas. Partisans would give undaunted support to the engagements of the Red Army and as effectively embarrass any action taken by the intruders. Such action would gain in effectiveness the farther the enemy marched into Russia.'

Among the many Germans who neglected to study this peculiarity and therefore greatly underestimated the potentiality and potency of partisan

activities among Soviet citizens, and consequently held far too biased and optimistic a view of the German invasion, were those who belonged to the circle of the *Journal of Geopolitics*, which was closely connected with personalities of high standing in the Third Reich. In its July 1941 issue this journal, shortly after the outbreak of Russo-German hostilities, published an article by Kurt Vorwinckel which is of particular and actual interest. The topic was discussed in the question form of '... another Napoleon?' The author proved that Germany not only underrated the possible actions of Russian partisans but also a great many other important things. Conditions in our days are quite different from those which existed in the Napoleonic epoch. Furthermore Vorwinckel is quite right in declaring that technical developments have rendered Hitler's task much more comprehensive than that of Napoleon and things were altogether different in the French Emperor's day. Vorwinckel argues that the immense advance made in technical devices has reduced the difficulties in overcoming vast spaces. The writer of the article considers that the Führer, even before the outbreak of the war on his eastern front and the wholesale retreat of the Russian army all along the line, had taken the task which lay before him in too superficial a manner. But Vorwinckel's major argument is that, owing to modern technique, territories can now be conquered which it would have been impossible for Napoleon to conquer because he had not the wherewithal to do so. The map of Europe has shrunk considerably in recent times, so that should the Führer deem it necessary to occupy Europe from the Channel to the Urals, he could do so with greater facility than it took Napoleon to occupy the Rhineland.

But in spite of all these theoretical calculations on the part of Vorwinckel, Napoleon entered Moscow on September 15th, 1812, whereas Hitler was still fairly far away from the Russian capital on September 15th, 1941. There must, consequently, be something wrong with Vorwinckel's geopolitical considerations. Above all, Vorwinckel seems to be amazingly inconsistent in that he shuts his eyes to the fact that not Hitler alone enjoys the advantages of the technical developments of our days, but Stalin in no less measure does so likewise. Furthermore, not in Europe alone have distances shrunk but the whole globe has undergone a similar metamorphosis, so that existing technical appliances assist the British Empire, the United States, and the Soviet Union in as high a measure as they do the Third Reich.

All the same, technical achievements and the increase of population, etc., are more advantageous to Germany than to Russia in certain respects. So is the situation of a continental power better than it was a century ago. But the more land a country conquers nowadays the more it is forced to conquer. The wealthier a nation is in men and weapons the greater its economic needs. Thus Germany's cry for more 'living space' means that she not only wishes to dominate European economy but economic affairs the world over, so that even if she should succeed in penetrating deeply into Asia, this will still be too exiguous a space for her vaulting ambitions. Napoleon was not faced by such acute troubles nor had he to envisage the conquest of Baku as Hitler has had to do in his urgent need of petrol. Ludendorff, like the Führer, was obliged to face this problem of oil supplies.



German experts, among them Friedensburg, calculated some years before the outbreak of World War No. II that the consumption of petrol would be two or three times greater than in peace-time. If this estimate be correct, then Germany, who needed seven million tons of petrol a year in peace, would need fifteen to twenty million tons a year in war. As a matter of fact, these estimates proved too high during the first stages of the second World War, for they were based on the supposition that hostilities would be long drawn out. In the initial phases of the present conflict Germany consumed not more than 1,600,000 tons of petrol during her campaign in Holland, Belgium, and France, but had seized over 2,500,000 tons of petrol while she was forging ahead so swiftly. Thus she had a surplus of roughly 1,000,000 tons of petrol. Apart from this she would not have encountered any difficulties regarding her petrol supply during the first phase of the present war, since she herself produced about 3,500,000 tons of synthetic motor oil in 1940, and had some million tons of petrol from the Rumanian oilfields to draw upon in the same year. The total of Rumanian oil output amounted to 5,800,000 tons in 1940, and the larger moiety of this went to Germany.

But as the war went dragging on the German petrol situation increasingly worsened. The question of where to get petrol during a war is one of Germany's most acute problems. Italy was in an even more unenviable position in this respect. In this connection H. G. Tonndorf's discussion

of the topic is of great interest. He says in his book *Oljan* (*Oil*, Stockholm, 1941), that 'Germany, after her preliminary successes, is now obliged not only to provide petrol for her own needs, but also for the use of many other countries. This she is compelled to do because otherwise the economic life of those countries would become endangered. The maintenance of these countries' economy is of prime importance to Germany. Under normal conditions all these territories taken together and now in German hands would need about twenty-two million tons of petrol a year. Yet Germany has only about eleven million tons to spare annually. In spite of the wonderful efficiency of Germany's industry for the production of synthetic oil, the ratio between supply and demand is even more unfavourable to her in this war than it was in the last.'

It is therefore quite comprehensible that Germany should have made so risky a bid to acquire the Caucasian oilfields. In 1939 the Soviet Union produced 29,500,000 tons of petrol. About 90 per cent of this was piped from Baku, Grozny, and Maikop. Baku is by far the most productive place among them, since about 73.5 per cent of the total Russian petrol is derived from this source. Baku was, therefore, the main target of German aspirations.

Gayda, Mussolini's intimate and zealous collaborator, declared very frankly at the time of the outbreak of the Russo-German war that 'getting oil is the chief objective now, because oil takes precedence of everything else in carrying on the war'. From this we may gather that the possession of the Russian oilfields was a question of the greatest urgency for the Axis powers. As it turned out, and on account of the resistance put up by the Red Army, Germany did not take possession of the Russian oilfields in the Caucasus, but on the contrary used up immense quantities of petrol during her military operations there. Naturally the giant motorized armies, moving on relatively bad roads, driving at full speed through vast steppes, swallowed up no end of petrol. Caucasian oil became a mirage so far as Germany was concerned. The hope that Caucasian oil would play as important a part in the second World War as Rumanian oil had played in first World War, in favour of the central European powers, dwindled away.

Baku is not only a fountain-head for petrol, but also 'a signpost pointing the way to India', as a former Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs once said. For this reason Soviet Russia had with all her might to protect the

Caucasus Mountains from German invasion both in her own interest and in that of her ally Great Britain. And Great Britain herself had good reason, jointly with Russia, to ask for effective counter-measures against German activities from the Iran government, because it was there that during the 1914-18 war Germany had built the military roads leading to Afghanistan. In addition to this, Britain had valuable oil reserves for the provisioning of her navy. Yet another pregnant factor played its role in the joint Russian and British invasion of Iran on August 25th, 1941. Russia and Great Britain were cut off from the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and had therefore to secure mutual communication by other ways. Control over Iran by Russia and Great Britain was an essential prerequisite to guaranteeing the arrival of transports from overseas to the Persian Gulf. Here they were unloaded before being sent on to Russia. It was of the utmost consequence that Russia's supply of war equipment from abroad should find this line of communication open.

The example of Iran shows clearly that great sea powers have many means at their disposal for replacing lost opportunities by new ones.



As in the first World War so in the second, Germany and her satellites controlled the inner line, whereas Great Britain and her allies controlled the exterior line. The great strategical advantage of controlling the inner line is unquestionably lost if the powers in possession of the inner line are forced to transfer the main scene of their military operations to remote areas which are within easy grasp of the powers of the exterior line, namely those countries which enjoy superiority at sea. In my opinion, this constitutes another instance for the concept that the technical appliances of our days, though they may enable the nation to surmount difficulties presented by vast spaces, cannot remove obstacles which have their roots in the vastness of space itself. To revert for a moment to what the geopolitician Vorwinckel says, his assertion that 'Hitler has nothing to fear from the obstacles imposed by vast spaces, as Napoleon had in his Russian campaign, even if the Führer had it in mind to drive the British out of India', seems rather invalid in view of the lessons learned during the campaigns in North Africa and in Russia herself.

In any case the possession of an exterior line of communication is of

great strategical value in the guarding of India from attack. Lines of communication play a foremost part in this instance. Though Alexander the Great had nothing to fear from an assault on the flank of his army, though this army was relatively small and, in view of its primitive armament and general requirements, did not need such lines of communication, German officers who fought in the Orient during the first World War admired Alexander the Great's organization of his lines of communication. From this the lesson can be drawn that great value is attached to lines of communication. The problem becomes of increasing importance when military equipment is on a vast scale and the soldiers' needs are increased. Liman von Sanders stated that the German lines of communication in the Orient had to accomplish three times as much as the Turkish, because the German soldier required enormously more in the way of equipment and health services than did the Turks owing to a climate to which they were unaccustomed. In this connection may be mentioned that German strategists very much disliked the ideas of that 'anonymous soldier' who believed that Britain could be vanquished in the Orient by relatively small forces. Lieutenant-General Kabisch wrote in his book *Controversial Questions of World War* (published 1927): 'The strategic fancy of the "anonymous soldier" shows that he has not the faintest notion of the difficulty in keeping troops in the remote Orient effective and ready for combat. Such a degree of ignorance is almost unbelievable when we recall the pitfalls encountered in Palestine and the fate of the Turkish armies in the Caucasian Mountains, etc.'

Field-Marshal von Hindenburg tells us in his autobiography that wide circles in Germany were greatly interested in the theatres of operation in the east, and that many Germans indulged in the idea 'of marching overland so as to seize our dangerous and powerful British enemy by the throat'. But, as Kuhl remarks, Hindenburg had no patience with such Napoleonic dreaming. The old man was right, because the most important preliminary condition for such an extensive enterprise was lacking, namely, adequate lines of communication. Kuhl added that the adventurous and fantastic plans put forward showed the authors to be without knowledge of conditions in the Orient. Britain rules not only the oceans but also the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea, and the lower Tigris and Euphrates. A modern 'Alexander march' to India belongs to the land of dreams. It would have been a major blunder on the part of the German High Command to aim

## NEW WORLD WAR—OLD PROBLEMS

at such an expedition, for it would have absorbed many forces which were badly needed in more decisive theatres of war.

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Count Reventlow, that passionate old man who hated Britain to the depth of his soul, gave expression to his feelings of bitter disappointment about the events of the first World War in a book. The Germans hoped for a war that resembled a crusade, a 'sacred war' as they were wont to say, which would bring about the disintegration of the British Empire. But their hopes proved vain, for the British Commonwealth advanced towards Germany on a front which was both compact and united. Therein lies the greatness and strength of the English peoples. They know very well how to take into account historical necessities abroad as well as in the homeland and to act accordingly, forestalling revolutions by political evolution. It is largely due to this faculty that the British Empire shows such superiority over other nations in overcoming the immense difficulties it had to face at the outbreak of the second World War.

It would be foolish to deny that the British Empire has its own special problems of home politics and many a Britisher believed that not enough was being done to solve these problems. But it may be taken for granted that all the political problems of the British Commonwealth taken together are not so threatening or of such a kind as those confronting Britain's enemies.

The Indian problem grew somewhat more complicated after Japan entered the war. But it is clear that Japan will not be able to achieve political ascendancy over the inhabitants of India nor will she ever succeed in occupying that country. The preliminary conditions for the former and for the latter do not exist. And though there was much discussion about Japan and Germany jointly taking action against India, there was no sign at all that such a combined movement would take place. The European continental powers are far away from India, and the roads to India would prove very thorny for their armies. The difficulties are many: geographic, climatic, technical. The most formidable obstacles of all are imposed by the armies and navies of Great Britain and the United States of America.

Grandiose as the conquest of India by a European continental power might be, it would fade into insignificance if that power maintained this

conquest and economically exploited it without having supremacy at sea. Though the chances of any European continental power taking possession of India by military forces 'dry-shod' is wellnigh impossible, the idea of repeating anew Alexander the Great's expedition has come to the fore again and again whenever invasion of the British Isles has failed. In spite of the manifold technical advances of modern days such an expedition would prove no easier than jumping from Calais to Dover, and would most certainly bring no profit to the conqueror.

It was not by the accident of fate that Napoleon did not get to India. But let us assume that he had got there. It might not have been so impossible at that epoch to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion there as it would be nowadays with Britain and the United States of America working hand in hand. William II was up against an absolute impossibility just as Hitler is to-day. Churchill said on April 27th, 1941: 'The Huns may lay their hands for a time upon the granaries of the Ukraine and the oil-wells of the Caucasus. They may dominate the Black Sea. They may dominate the Caspian. Who can tell? We shall do our best to meet them and fight them wherever they go. But there is one thing which is certain. There is one thing which rises out of the vast welter which is sure and solid, and which no one in his senses can mistake. . . . In order to win this war, he [Hitler] must either conquer this island by invasion, or he must cut the ocean lifeline which joins us to the United States.'

The last sentence seems to conflict with a statement made by Churchill on June 4th, 1940, when he assured the public that the British Empire would continue to fight, 'even if this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving'. But it must be remembered that the Prime Minister emphasized at the same time his belief that such a disaster would never overtake the British Isles. Nor did Churchill, on the face of it, ever harbour the remotest fear that such a highly problematic event would take place.

Broadcasting from the B.B.C., Churchill declared on June 22nd, 1941, that he was not at all surprised at Germany's invasion of Russia. He was in a position to say this because of his intimate knowledge of the conditions and the general course the battle for the Atlantic was taking as well as of German invasion plans regarding the British Isles. It may be assumed that Churchill felt quite safe on his island, perhaps even safer

than he would officially admit. We even believe that his remark on the same date, that Hitler's invasion of Russia 'may be a prelude to an attempted invasion of the British Isles', was mainly dictated by psychological acumen and reflections on the political situation arising out of the war. If repeated allusion to pending German invasion of the British Isles was also meant to stimulate the British people into making every effort in favour of war production, it certainly acted with good effect. We cannot, therefore, agree with General von Kuhl when he expressed astonishment and asked: 'Why on earth was the fear of a German invasion deliberately kept alive in England during the whole duration of the first World War?' At any rate, it would not seem either useful or expedient during the present war to blink the possibility of a German invasion of the British Isles, be it officially or half-officially, because that might on the one hand create too high an optimism and thus bring about a slackening of the war effort on the part of the British Empire, while on the other hand the United States of America might react unfavourably too. Since Churchill knows best what can and what should be said, we may take it for granted that he had very good reason for not even hinting at the historical experience that Britain's deadly enemy did not march against the east until such time as he had lost every hope of coping with British sea power and invading the British Isles.

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The former Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, said in his jocular and characteristic way early in July 1941, that 'Hitler's failure to vanquish Britain proves his lack of training for a Channel swim, so he was in duty bound to set "lightning war" against Russia agoing'. A similar situation occurred in 1812, and Stalin is right when he compares the contemporary Russo-German conflict with the war in that year. A comparison of prevailing conditions with those in the first World War in respect of Germany's tactics towards Russia is easily made.

A parallel can also be drawn between the lost sea fight of Trafalgar and Napoleon's march on Moscow and Germany's failure in her U-boat warfare and Ludendorff's march into the Ukraine. What of the present war? It seems to us probable that National Socialist Germany would have invaded Russia even if the results of her U-boat campaign had been so satisfactory as to bring about Great Britain's capitulation within a measur-

able space of time. Nevertheless, the coincidence that the sinkings due to U-boat activities were at their lowest in June 1941 as compared with previous months and the start of Germany's war against Russia at the same time, has a symbolical significance all its own. What Churchill said on November 12th, 1941 about ship losses due to U-boats may be cited: 'In the four months ending with June, we lost just over 2,000,000 tons, or an average of 500,000 tons per month. In the last four months ending with October, we lost less than 750,000 tons, or an average of 180,000 tons per month. 180,000 contrasts very favourably with 500,000 tons.'

Attlee, the Deputy Prime Minister, stated in the House of Commons on January 8th, 1942, that a satisfactory decline in shipping losses continued. This is corroborated by figures furnished by the Germans themselves. According to them, 537,000 tons were sunk in August, 683,000 tons in September, 441,000 tons in October, 232,000 tons in November, and 257,000 tons in December 1941.

In the above-mentioned speech, Churchill likewise was optimistic about Great Britain's situation in regard to food supplies, declaring that stocks of provisions in Britain had doubled since September 1939. He added: 'In the various remarks which the Deputy-Führer, Herr Hess, has let fall from time to time during his sojourn in our midst, nothing has been more clear than that Hitler relied upon the starvation attack more than upon invasion to bring us to our knees. His hopes were centred upon starvation, as his boasts have made the world aware. So far as 1941 at least is concerned, those hopes have been dashed to the ground.'

It is significant that so great a statesman as Churchill, whose reserve is well known, did not end this favourable statement on the war situation without giving a warning: 'But this only increases his need to come at us by direct invasion as soon as he can screw up his courage and make his arrangements to take the plunge.' In this connection we may point out that Napoleon reverted to his invasion plan of 1797-98 when his plans regarding the east had miscarried after tsar Paul's assassination and when he had resumed the war against England after the peace of Amiens. Similar signs can be read in Germany's fluctuating fortunes in the second World War. First she uttered threats of invasion, then menaced Britain with annihilation by U-boat warfare, and finally, when the U-boats had failed to bring about a decision in 1941, this threat alternated with loud fanfares which announced annihilating blows in the east as the

harbingers of the end of the British blockade of Germany and even of final victory over Britain. From all this, the real motives of Germany's offensive against Russia can readily be gleaned.

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The core of all the developments which have taken place in the course of the second World War lies in that Germany, having no other way out of her difficulties, was compelled to march into Russia. That she was forced to do so is as great a triumph of British sea supremacy as when Napoleon, too, in his day, was compelled to take the field against Russia.

But when Germany set going her immense war machine against Russia the ratio of her strength in the air to that of the British Isles changed to her disadvantage, for she had to switch a considerable part of her air fleet to the eastern front. This fact is an interesting subject for a consideration of 'Air power and Sea power'.

Though the blockade imposed by Britain on Germany had forced the National Socialists to march into Russia, the Third Reich in their propaganda sought to turn the tables by claiming that this blockade had been frustrated by the German invasion of the Soviet Union. This was the third time that the Germans screamed across the Channel to England: 'We have wrested your most powerful weapon from your hands.' The first time this cry resounded was when Ludendorff entered the Ukraine in 1918; the second when the Russo-German pact was signed on August 23rd, 1939. Shortly after the first time Germany broke down completely; and not so long after Germany had been jubilant over her 'blockade-runner Soviet Russia' she took the field with her armies against her own 'blockade-runner'. Twice Germany claimed that the British blockade had been destroyed, thus proving her boast to be a mere illusion or sheer war propaganda.

Apart from the fact that even had the German break-through to the east proved a success it would not have solved Germany's economic problems. The Germans did not derive much economic advantage from the Russian provinces they occupied. In the first place the Russians had before evacuating indefensible positions destroyed industrial plants, agricultural machines, railways, etc. at these places, and had carried off cattle, tractors, railway carriages, etc. Secondly, the Russian population

## THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

which remained behind set up an extremely effective resistance to the armies of occupation. Thirdly, Russian partisans' activities led to considerable confusion in the enemy's systematized economy. In contrast with conditions prevailing in 1918, the German armies had to bear in mind that there were very strong Russian forces and a mighty Soviet air force to contend with. Also this time Russia would have powerful allies, such as Great Britain and possibly the United States of America. These many adverse factors made the economic exploitation of occupied Russian areas very difficult. In spite of all the efforts made by the Germans to organize the economic life of the Ukraine, results fell far short of expectations, though they took more from the Ukraine this time than in 1918. The Germans at home were, as early as March 1942, deeply disappointed because they were informed that food rations would have to be reduced drastically in April. The German press had warned the German people against indulging in hopes of a quick utilization of occupied Russian territory and an abundant influx of food from the Ukraine, since this province was not a land brimming over with milk and honey as many thought, and it would need a year to reap a full harvest. To coat the bitter pill of reduced food rations, extravagant promises were made to the German people as to future supplies. Certainly, territories acquired in the east could not solve the urgent food problem of Greater Germany with practically the whole of Europe to cater for.

Not only the provision of quantities of food, but also its appropriate distribution, plays a prominent part in the feeding of the whole population of a country. So much depends on means of transport, in which Germany was badly off, as her railway system was overstrained. One illustration will suffice. Though there was a plentiful crop of potatoes in Germany, this important article of diet was often difficult to get in the larger towns because of insufficient transport. This is not surprising when we remember that in the 1914-18 war in France the Allied Armies claimed 75 per cent of the carrying capacity of the French railways. There is even less reason for surprise when it is remembered that a considerable part of European inland trade uses sea routes in times of peace. Whenever practicable the means of transport by water is preferred because it is less expensive than by rail. Traffic is therefore adjusted to it. But since sea traffic to European continental countries is in part eliminated and is risky in war-time the deficit has to be made good by river, rail, or lorry.

The use of overland routes, again, is restricted because of greater and quicker wear and tear of material and because of difficulties in procuring the necessary quantities of fuel. War traffic is thus a serious problem for Germany.

It was significant of the abrupt change in the war situation that Germany in 1942 was assuring the world at large again and again that she was ready to meet any attempted invasion on the part of the Allies. Whereas Germans shouted to Britain formerly, 'Look out, we're coming', now they were shouting, 'Come on, if you dare'.

In the meantime Germany behaved as though she had already conquered the whole Caucasus and brought home all its wealth and had defeated the Soviet Union. On August 13th, 1941, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote that Germany would be invincible after her Russian campaign, and nobody would henceforth venture to attack her. In its issue of October 26th, 1941, this paper assured its readers that petrol and oil would never again be a problem for Germany, and that the British blockade and the R.A.F. no longer mattered so far as Greater Germany was concerned. The Third Reich's Minister of Economics, Dr. Funk, expressed himself with rather more reserve than the *Frankfurter Zeitung* when he claimed at that time that events in the Russian theatre of war were bringing Germany within sight of a decisive victory. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, on the other hand, asserted that the war was then already decided on the continent, and not as the British had conceived it would be on the Atlantic. This indicates very clearly what Germany ardently hoped for. In this connection we have to remember that the German regime was disappointed at the results of its U-boat campaign and had already lost every hope of effecting a compromise peace with Great Britain and the United States. One outlet alone remained to National Socialist Germany: to make the best possible use of her war with Soviet Russia, alike militarily, economically, and politically.

Besides exerting her full strength in order to bring her lavish plans to fruition, Germany had also to use her propaganda for the same aims. By 'revolutionizing economy in the east' Germany would be rendered ever more independent and free from Churchill's or Roosevelt's interference—so ran the catchwords of the German press. Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister to the Third Reich, meant much the same thing when he said on November 26th, 1941: 'Militarily unassailable and economically

secure as we are, we can devote ourselves to the political organization of our continent as if peace had already been proclaimed.'

The 'as if' philosophy, so dearly beloved of the Germans, is a dubious way of thinking. The idea that the war would fade away of itself, so to say, does not seem to contain the faintest glimmer of reality. Even in the days of Napoleon, who did not depend very much on world economy and who of course knew nothing of war from the air, such a fantastic ending of a war was impossible to conceive. The slow petering out of war would most certainly not mean its end, but, rather, the decay of life and culture in Europe. Lord Halifax declared in March 1941 that Britain would fight for twenty years if necessary. This would be no easy task even for such a great sea power as Britain. But the claim Ribbentrop made on November 26th, 1941, that, if necessary, Germany could wage war for thirty years without in the least endangering Europe was fantastic. The first World War did not last anywhere near as long as did Napoleon's war against Britain. In addition to other reasons, the economic and social development of Europe conduced to much of what subsequently occurred. Since Germany has come to a deadlock both on the English Channel and on the eastern front through the failure to carry into effect her 'lightning war', it is easy to conclude the wherefore of Ribbentrop's assertion that Germany could well afford an extremely protracted war. He was merely making a virtue of necessity. On November 8th, 1941, Hitler declared: 'I never used the word "Blitzkrieg" because it is an idiotic expression.'

Germany could not let the war drift along and enjoy the conquests she had made. She was compelled, just as Napoleon was in his time, to submit to the enemy's purpose of continuing the war. Consequently she must try at all cost to impose by force of arms a peace on Great Britain. Thus, following in Napoleon's footsteps, Germany turned in a political and strategical vicious circle.

On December 8th, 1941, Berlin declared that Germany would not carry on with the offensive in the east during the winter. But the fact remained that Germany, in view of her conflict with the Anglo-American alliance, was compelled to go forward to ever-renewed conquests. The Nazi armies were still far away from the Caucasus when the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote on October 6th, 1941: 'The new German supplies from eastern Europe will only be fully guaranteed when the British have been

hurled out of this region and from her present position in the Mediterranean.'

In existing circumstances, such National Socialist utterances as that 'Germany is about to make herself independent of the question as to whether or not Churchill and Roosevelt are willing to make peace' seem on the face of it to be nothing else than idle talk. Nor could Stalin be ignored. He predicted on November 7th, 1941, that after a while Fascist Germany would break down under the weight of her crimes. We do not know upon what facts Stalin's prophecy was based. All we know for certain is that the Russian armies took up their counter-offensive against the Germans, and that the Russian government returned to Moscow shortly afterwards. Thus the great continental power was not in a position to behave as if peace reigned. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* of October 19th, 1941, referring to this point, says rather frankly that the British Empire would continue to wage war with the same vigour she had displayed hitherto, because she had no intention of relinquishing a great European fight before she had won it. In the same article the question is raised, 'When will peace come?' The author stated it as his belief that peace will not be made before 'German weapons have again been directed against the west'.

From these words can be deduced the fact that Germany realized that the present conflict would not be decided in the east but in the western theatre of war, that hostilities would not just ' peter out ', and that Germany would be forced, as before, to put up a big fight in the west to conquer her principal enemy by military means and then dictate peace terms. Failing in this she must collapse under the pressure of the British blockade and the air war as well as by the disintegrating influence of political and social difficulties on the continent. Conquests in the east might postpone a decision on the western front and in specific circumstances such a delay might be of some importance. It could not, however, prevent the final outcome of the war being decided in the west. In its issue of October 19th, 1941, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* portrays how, to its way of thinking, these developments will take place. According to the *Zeitung* the war in the east (the result of which is supposedly already decided) will come to an end within a measurable space of time, and then the hour will strike 'when the British will be compelled, for the first time, alone and unassisted, to look war closely in the face as the peoples of continental Europe have so often done before and are again doing now'.

## THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

Hitler declared that the British had indirect help from the Russians because the greater part of the German Luftwaffe, not just a part of it, had to play the watchdog in the east. The British retorted that in reality the Germans had flung their entire Luftwaffe, not merely a part of it, against Britain, according to what Germans themselves had formerly affirmed. Unquestionably, either the Germans were not bluffing when they asserted that their entire Luftwaffe had gone for Britain in order to delude the Russians into such a belief or they did not tell the truth when they asserted that the greater part of their Luftwaffe was on guard in the east in order to conceal the fact that their entire Luftwaffe could not accomplish the feat of forcing England to her knees. In all probability the British version is correct. Such illusions do not fall into line with the British character either in normal circumstances or in war. On the contrary, Britons are inclined to minimize their successes rather than exaggerate them. After 1918, while the Germans liked to say 'we nearly won the war', the Britains used to say 'we nearly lost the war'. Owing to this sound attitude of mind, the British government does not need to veil or conceal facts and events of interest from the public. It can be taken for granted, therefore, that the British people would not have been left in the dark as to whether the Germans had attacked England with the full strength of the Luftwaffe or had used a part of it only. Certainly had Churchill believed what Hitler said about his disposition of the Luftwaffe, he would have drawn the English people's attention to it.

I do not believe that it would have been too great a risk for Germany to set her whole air force against Britain, because it seems very unlikely that the Russians had any offensive intentions against Germany at that time. And even if they had such a plan and had put it to effective account, the Germans could easily and in good time have diverted an appropriate part of their Luftwaffe from the west to the east. The German air force was at its peak both as to quantity and quality. The Germans would have run a certain risk had they been menaced by a Russian stab in the back, in spite of the precautions of maintaining a large land army on their eastern frontiers. Neither the National Socialist government nor the German High Command ever shrank from taking risks for the sake of a substantial gain. A big opportunity to strike a decisive blow at Britain by the Luftwaffe did at that time exist. In addition, everything was at stake, as Germany knew very well. Yes, everything — not only the question as to the

momentarily favourable or unfavourable issue of the conflict. Behind the evil of a long-lasting war there lurked the danger of losing supremacy in the air and being doomed to forgo her vast advantages of superiority in armour. In some German circles the question arose whether the fatherland would be given another opportunity of smashing a superior sea power by superior air power should Germany in this fateful hour lose the opportunity offered her.

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In this connection a very interesting passage in a speech of Churchill's in the House of Commons on January 27th, 1937, may be cited: 'For my part, I believe that the day will come when the ground will decisively master the air, and when the raiding aeroplane will almost certainly be clawed down from the skies in flaming ruin. But I fear that perhaps ten years, ten critical and fateful years, will pass before any such security will come and that in the interval only minor palliatives will be at our disposal.'

Such or similar thoughts might well have been tantalizing the Germans. But apart from whether or not such action should have been taken there were many other good reasons for the National Socialist leadership to throw in their entire and immense air force in order to overcome England even at the risk of a Russian stab in the back. It can be assumed that Germany did actually throw in her entire Luftwaffe against the British Isles. Nevertheless Germany failed, and again Russia was blamed for having rescued Britain. This time it was Germany who cursed Russia; last time it was Napoleon who claimed that the attempted invasion of England in 1805 had to be broken off owing to Russia's attitude. But now we have learned from history that Napoleon's aggressive actions against England were halted for other reasons than Russia's attitude. The German historian Treitschke elucidated the true connection between cause and effect when he wrote: 'Nothing could have been more welcome to Napoleon when he found himself in such straits than the news about the war preparations of the coalition. Eagerly he seized the pretext his enemies had so conveniently placed in the path.' How far the comparison between Napoleon's and Hitler's situation in regard to an invasion of the British Isles may be carried history will decide.

If Germany did not fling the whole of her air force against England from August to October 1940, she certainly surpassed Great Britain in the

number of aircraft she could put into the contest. It is unlikely that the ratio of German to British aircraft was ever as favourable to Germany as it was in those days. Nazi Germany could not allow the war to peter out or to make peace by political negotiations. Germany had had enormous military successes and her enemies had had to endure great reverses, but what really matters is whether all successes taken together could result in positive victory, and whether all failures summoned up could result in decisive defeat. A correct judgment about the prevailing situation can only be estimated by an accurate consideration of these factors. Lieutenant-General Horst von Metzsch, an eminent German war politician, stresses this point when he remarked (in 1939): 'Had the actual difference between military success and victory on the one hand, and mishap and military defeat on the other hand, been taken strictly into account in the course of the first World War, Germans, in all probability, would have become aware of the gravity of the situation earlier and with greater accuracy. As it was, millions of Germans were thunderstruck when Germany started to break down.'

The territorial gains resulting from German troops marching into France in the early days of the war of 1914-18 were cheered loudly and celebrated as great victories, whereas military experts knew, or at least ought to have known, that in reality Germany had suffered a defeat, since the Schlieffen plan had so completely failed in execution. This fact is characterized by a private letter Colonel-General von Einem wrote in May 1917: 'I refuse to despair, but I can no longer believe in a German victory — unless God works a miracle. How I wish it would happen.' But the vast majority of the German population thought the general situation of war highly satisfactory even in 1918, for they were dazzled by the great territorial gains the Fatherland had made in the east. The armies of the Third Reich did, in the second war, conquer even vaster territories in the east than did Imperial Germany in 1918.

All the battles and encircling manoeuvres on the continent cannot hide the fact that the whole of Europe is locked up by Great Britain, and that only by a victorious sea fight could Germany extricate herself. Take a look at the earth's globe. You will see that so small a territory as Europe cannot unhinge the world unless she dominates the seas. Stalin is among those who are well aware of this fact. This perception may be gleaned by a casual remark he made to Sir Stafford Cripps, when the latter was British

ambassador to Moscow: 'No country is in a position to master Europe unless it makes itself master of the sea.'

Naturally the Anglo-American bloc had its reactions on the German invasion of Russia, for the Nazis intensified their preparations for war while at the same time promising aid to the Soviet Union. Churchill declared on June 22nd, 1941: 'We have but one aim and one single irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime. From this nothing will turn us — nothing. We will never parley with Hitler or any of his gang.'

Ribbentrop observed on the occasion of an interview that the tripartite pact with Japan of September 27th, 1940, had been signed in the hope of bringing Roosevelt to reason and keeping the United States of America out of the war. This policy is easily intelligible when we recall Germany's endeavours to defeat Britain by the U-boat campaign and thus place before the United States an accomplished fact. But just as the Germans erred in their expectations with regard to the agreement with Russia, so were they mistaken as to the outcome of the tripartite pact. Though Germany gained a powerful ally in Japan she failed to attain the chief aim of the tripartite pact: to keep out of the war a far more formidable power than Japan — the United States of America. On the contrary, Japan deliberately drove the United States into war.

The impact of Japanese naval and military power produced startling repercussions on the general situation of the Allies in the Far East and the Pacific, in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean favourable to the Axis powers, but all these disadvantages are outweighed by the important fact that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941 definitely put an end to American isolationism and sealed the Anglo-American alliance. For a time no doubt Great Britain obtained fewer planes from the United States until America had transformed her industries from peace to war production. But once her war production was in full swing, war supplies from the United States to the British Empire and to Russia could not fail to be abundant. In his speech of December 8th, 1941, Roosevelt declared: 'We shall want and demand double the money and materials as well as quadrupled production. We must bear in mind that a Japanese success in the Pacific would mean aiding German operations in Libya, and that a German victory in the Caucasus would unquestionably mean aiding Japan.' Roosevelt could not have expressed himself more clearly, for the

war in the Pacific and the Atlantic, in North Africa and Russia had to be considered as a homogeneous and indivisible entity, and had to be waged accordingly.



In the above-mentioned speech, Roosevelt said also that though the United States were resolved to do away with the Japanese danger once and for all, it would be unavailing to the end in view to do this while leaving the rest of the world under Hitler's and Mussolini's sovereignty.

To what extent Germany and Italy were informed about or agreed to Japan's premeditated assault on the United States cannot yet be known with any certainty. In the prevailing circumstances it may have been a shrewd psychological trick for Hitler and Mussolini, once the attack had been launched by Japan, not to wait for a formal declaration of war from the United States and to anticipate it as they did by announcing that Germany and Italy considered themselves to be belligerents in regard to America. Hitler and Mussolini would inevitably have had sooner or later to tell their people the portentous news, but by doing so on December 11th, 1941, when Japan was in a position to place an outstanding success to her credit account at the expense of the British and American navies, these tidings, gloomy as they were to the German and Italian peoples, were dressed up in the glory of a crushing blow dealt to the fleet of the common enemy Britain and her supporter the United States. On the same day, the American House of Representatives approved the declaration of war on Germany and Italy by 393 votes to 0, and the Senate by 90 votes to 0. From this it is quite in order to draw the conclusion that, as Delbrück and the men who were of similar mind supposed, the United States would have entered World War No. I at an earlier date had the Central Powers achieved their 'Cannae' in France at that time.

Never in the history of mankind have there been two such eventful years as 1939-1941 with their incredible surprises and changes. He who kept a critical eye on events and who also remembered what happened during the first World War with all its manifold ups and downs would be loth to risk a prophecy concerning what lies on the knees of the gods, so long as the war is not definitely concluded. But it is permissible to make a summary of events and the lessons to be learned from them.

(1) World history has a liking for again closing the circle of events in the

course of a war between a European continental power and Great Britain. In this specific instance a continental power marched eastward in order to beat the British Commonwealth on the continent itself. Then it proposed to invade the British Isles and later to conquer Egypt. Thus, by effectively counter-mining economic warfare, it hoped to stage a modern Alexander-the-Great expedition to India. But the course the war has taken shows that neither the U-boats nor the Luftwaffe was able to crush a truly great sea power or to prevent a repetition of the cycle of events in regard to war against the British Empire. Supremacy at sea is as important to-day as it was in the Napoleonic epoch and in the era of Kaiser William II.

(2) If a continental power is not able to break the supremacy of a sea power by some means or other, that sea power will in the end prevail. This is a thoroughly logical conclusion.

But so far as our second premise is concerned, we have to bear in mind that victory does not come to a sea power in every circumstance and without effort on the part of that sea power. Supremacy at sea is no mystical and magical possession. It is of the highest value, to be sure, but can only operate in particular and special circumstances. Despite the many and substantial differences between sea power and land power, they have some qualities in common. Neither can of itself create and maintain a lasting empire in both peace and war. Britain owes an immense debt to her power at sea. In modern times it is unimaginable that a vast realm can exist without adequate sea power. But this supremacy at sea does not guarantee the continued existence of any power. To all appearances, Admiral Tirpitz and his circle had not realized this fundamental fact when Imperial Germany started her naval policy at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Italy and Japan, when they inaugurated a world policy and naval armament, seem to have closed their eyes to the fact that Great Britain had not spontaneously become a world power solely because she possessed a grand fleet. An empire such as that of Britain is not just 'grown' by building battleships.

It is questionable whether Great Britain would have won the first World War had she not enjoyed the friendship and later on the co-operation of the United States of America. Britain was in a very critical situation in spite of her overwhelming supremacy at sea. The difficulties which confronted her were allayed by her adroit foreign policy, which brought her powerful friends and allies who in the final resort helped her to victory.

## THRICE AGAINST ENGLAND

Another factor which favoured Great Britain was her home policy which is invariably far-seeing, elastic, and of a conciliatory nature. Had the government pursued a policy of force within the empire, this would have paralysed the efficiency of the navy. The Germans have persisted in harbouring a totally false idea as to the true character of British home policy and their hopes of dealing a shattering blow at Great Britain have invariably been frustrated. They have been sustained by the belief that internal disunity would weaken Britain's powers of resistance. The unity of the Empire has invariably been strengthened by danger from outside.

Above everything else we have to take into account the close relationship which exists between the political order in Great Britain and her social order, for this enhances her possibilities and chances with regard to the perfect utilization of her sea power. This close relationship made itself manifest during the period of total war with its heavy and devastating attacks from the air. Britain's imposing sea power would not have had a chance to show its might had not the British people themselves displayed so marvellous a stoicism and borne all the hardships which the bombardment of their native land entailed. This they were able to do precisely because there was no sign of a crumbling, or decadence, or decomposition of the social order. There was nothing but a ready willingness on the part of the whole population to go through 'blood and toil and sweat and tears' proudly and uprightly. This attitude on the part of the peoples of the British Isles made it possible for the navy to force Germany to march eastwards against Russia. Thereby she reaped a reward for her bravery and acquired a new and unconquerable ally.

In 1939 Metsch wrote: 'It is erroneous to believe that cracks in the social order can be repaired through the common distresses caused by war. On the contrary, critical situations arising out of hostilities only serve to widen the breaches. Social contrasts can sometimes be smoothed out during days of peace. But the armed forces of a nation only prove themselves to be valiant and reliable in the field if harmony prevails on the home front. The people's valour is undermined in peace-time if social tensions exist; but during a war such tensions cripple the army.'

The undeniable fact that the peoples of Great Britain unanimously put up with the hardships and trials imposed upon them after the Russo-German treaty justifies the conclusion that within the islands themselves

the real unity which existed was further developed once war began. Such endurance does not issue from a disunited nation. Some may question this assertion when they consider the attitude adopted by the British public from 1933 to the days of the Munich agreement. But these have to learn that a truly democratic nation, such as the British, feels obliged to make tentative moves in different directions to discover the most useful solution of grave difficulties arising from foreign politics before finally resolving to use the ultimate means of settling matters—to counter force with force. Once the government of Great Britain, in consultation with the Dominions, had decided after long hesitation and due consideration to take up arms, they had the whole of the Commonwealth behind them. While a native common sense had so long restrained the people from aggressive action, this democratic people, once determined to fight, will go on unswervingly and will hold out to the bitter end. As Churchill so aptly remarked on November 7th, 1941: 'No country made more strenuous efforts to avoid being drawn into this war, but I dare say we shall be found ready and anxious to prosecute it when some of those who provoked it are talking vehemently about "peace".'

Switching over to war conditions in such a democratic country as Great Britain is in the main an active process on the part of the whole nation, whereas in the dictator states it is brought about by a series of governmental decrees and edicts. On the face of it its war organization may not appear to be as effective as in a totalitarian country like Germany under the dictatorship of a Hitler. But appearances are deceptive, as was proved in the course of the first World War. In his work *Fundamental Principles of Military Policy* (Hamburg, 1933), K. L. Oertzen, a war politician of the Seeckt school, points out that the position of the Imperial governments of Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Russia, though they disposed of a plenitude of power, became increasingly weaker 'until eventually the reins slipped from their hands'. Things went in quite another direction with the western democracies. Obviously Oertzen's remark relates to a question so frequently discussed after 1918. Could Germany's collapse in 1918 have been avoided if political measures or police interference had been introduced? Oertzen among many others deems that Britain would readily have found a solution to such problems. Among the manifold subjects discussed after Germany's defeat was the

usefulness of propaganda and its limitations. Lieutenant-General Marx' criticisms mentioned before have a bearing on this particular issue. After World War No. I, the Germans discussed in every detail the reason why what they called 'patriotic lessons' had so utterly failed to impress the German army. The profound political and social contrasts at that time existing in the group of Central Powers together with the wide divergence of opinion as to war aims could not be bridged by any amount of propaganda. The psychological value of propaganda in times of war is very great, yet it must not be overestimated. Especially is this the case now when propaganda is being carried out to so extensive a degree. Propaganda is necessary, but, to quote Pintschovius: 'Propaganda touches the surface only. It may act as a persuasive instrument, but it is incapable of convincing the masses. No smattering of instruction on a given situation can bring conviction. This is only attained by a sovereign understanding with its resultant wholehearted support.' A superficial comprehension such as that achieved by propaganda is like plaster on a wall which flakes off under the impact of violent shocks. There are many who will agree with this. Also they will agree that 'only he who cherishes and protects within his own heart the ideal of freedom and is willing to sacrifice his life to its achievement, who considers justice and independence of mind to be essentials, is in a fit state to perceive the glory of his native land as the very essence of his own individual honour.'

It used to be said that National Socialism was the artificial product of 'monopoly capitalism'. But this is not the case. It is a social mass-movement evolved from particular political developments which have been in process of growth for decades. The Commission of Enquiry instituted by the Reichstag to investigate the causes of Germany's collapse in 1918 issued a work which has become the standard book of reference on this subject. In this, Professor Hobohm declares that the ideology of force, fostered by the adherents of a victorious peace, was fully and universally accepted by those classes among the German people which had hailed with delight the anti-social laws issued during Bismarck's term of office. These classes had persisted in continuing the policy these measures entailed. When the first World War had come to an end, the same champions of victorious peace got together and laid the foundations on which National Socialism is based. Thus 'upstarts, who had imbibed the old German ideas of power and domination, climbed on top and their actions were all

guided by these old ideas. Those who had enthusiastically welcomed the advent of the anti-social laws now supported the new National Socialist leaders with undiminished zeal—and to all appearances they are still doing so. Naturally the issue is a highly complicated one. Were a systematic analysis of National Socialism to be undertaken, these and many other factors would have to be taken into account. This is the core of the problem.

In these days of mass-movements in which whole populations take part, it is incredible that one man from the underworld should rise from obscurity to absolute dictatorship unless he has the backing of the mass of his compatriots who hope for immense material advantages from the new regime and are willing to sacrifice their freedom in order to gain other advantages in exchange. This has been the case in Germany. There is no denying the fact that the greater part of the population of Germany did back the National Socialists. And the success of the National Socialists at the outset was admired and gained the support of leaders in other lands who led their countries into disastrous co-operation with the all-conquering Nazis. That is what counts. All the erstwhile political authorities such as Hugenburg, Class, Papen, and Edgar Jung who represented the interests of the Herrenclub (Gentlemen's Club) and whose policies are still alive under the leadership of Rauschning and others, failed in their counter-revolutionary undertakings because they had not the broad masses of the people behind them. The German masses were at times moved to derisive laughter by their ineffective gestures. In the end they succumbed to the tenets of National Socialism.

Germany became a democracy after the last war: she shook off the tutelage of her ancient aristocracy. The middle class and burgherdom, in so far as they were liberal-minded, together with the social democratic masses, were an easy prey to a ruthless and extensive anti-democratic movement such as that of National Socialism. The National Socialists showed themselves to be capable organizers and put all the technical devices of modern times to use in the setting up of a stern and absolute dictatorship. The old German aristocratic regime, because of its traditionalism, was unable to achieve such an aim—though Class had mapped out a political programme in 1912 which, fundamentally, aimed at dictatorship in the National Socialist sense of the word.

In the days of Emperor William I, the conservative elements among the middle class and the peasantry constituted a formidable group of more or less dependent vassals under the leadership of aristocrats, Pan-Germans, etc. But already towards the close of the nineteenth century the aristocratic conservatives had to make considerable concessions to the proletariat. After the first World War, mainly as the outcome of a lost war, with its attendant revolution, inflation, and economic crisis, the people got the better of the policy engendered by the aristocracy.

The vitality of the National Socialists is displayed in the fact that they succeeded in creating a vigorous dictatorship. On the other hand a certain political and social weakness is evident in that they were forced to establish a relentless dictatorship because of the number of their opponents. It could not have maintained itself in power had it shown any slackness in relation to the oppositional forces. From the viewpoint of competence and a policy of 'the strong hand' the plebeian dictatorship imposed by the National Socialists marked a vast improvement upon the bureaucratic and authoritarian governments of Bismarck, Napoleon III, William II, tsar Nicholas, etc. But events have shown us that the efficiency of the totalitarian state has been grossly exaggerated in many respects.

For instance, the totalitarian government claimed that it had achieved the fullest co-operation both in the political and economic fields, from statesmen and officers alike. This, so they told the world, was in marked contrast with what prevailed in democratic countries. But from what can be gathered from occurrences in the totalitarian states this alleged harmony is very different from real conditions. One example will suffice. There were good reasons undoubtedly for the dismissal, on December 21st, 1941, of General Walter von Brauchitsch, the Commander-in-Chief of the German army and a Field Marshal, and for Hitler's own assumption of the supreme command. Thus the Chancellor of the Third Reich became at one stroke both head of the state and Commander-in-Chief of all his armed forces. The *New York Times* published this news a day in advance and foreign correspondents in Berlin who inquired as to the correctness of the statement were told by authoritative Germans that there was no foundation for the news but that it came from British propaganda sources in order to shake the confidence of the German High Command. Yet the very next day the report was confirmed officially, thus proving that British propaganda services had nothing

whatever to do with it. Significantly enough this sensational event - which nothing on the Russian front could have then provided an excuse for - was followed by a great deal of talk about the 'logical prosecution' of Hitler's resolution of February 4th, 1938. At that time he dismissed von Blomberg, his Minister of War, and Baron von Fritsch, his Commander-in-Chief. Other ministers of state went by the board at the same date. It was then that Hitler decreed: 'I myself' will henceforth hold supreme command of all the German forces, and shall be personally and directly responsible.' But in the course of subsequent military events it became obvious that something was wrong with this concentration of power in Hitler's hands.<sup>1</sup>

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It is impossible to predict whether total dictatorship would have been able to achieve the great deeds that the democracies have performed in furthering the welfare of mankind. Measured by the yardstick of energy and size, Germany has achieved what may be rightly called 'the enormous'. But what the democracies have brought about, when measured by the yardstick of human rights, may just as fairly be named 'the magnificent'. We hope, we believe, nay we are sure, that sound democracy, self-disciplined by its deep consciousness of the dignity of man, will in the final resort prevail over any enemy and that its moral superiority will decide the world issue. Further, the conviction remains that Great Britain will win in the struggle because of her many political and economic advantages over her enemies. The victory will be gained because of the free institutions enjoyed by her working class upon which so much depends in this war of machines and industries.

<sup>1</sup> This is borne out by the German generals' plot against Hitler's life in July 1944, which occurred after this book was written. (Editorial note.)

